

No 13  
35p monthly

**STAR WARS** - the new science fiction epic appears in...

# HAMMER

THE HOUSE OF

- \* MANSION OF THE DOOMED
- \* VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN
- \* NIGHTMARE IN BLOOD
- \* SUMMER OF SECRETS
- \* BLOOD CITY
- \* ALUCARDA
- \* SUSPIRIA

THE  
**PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES**

- TOLD IN COMICS

L E M I O



Another **Planet of the Apes** sequel? No, the seven-foot shiney-nosed creature is in fact Chewbacca. And considering that he's one of the *heroes* of the new Fox sensation, **Star Wars**, the mind boggles over what the villains must look like. More on this sci-fi epic on pages 22 to 26 this issue.

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# Editorial

When we first doubted up to monthly frequency, my biggest fear was that we just wouldn't have enough material to fill fifty-two pages, twelve times a year. Bi-monthly issues had been fine, but 624 pages a year?

It quickly turned out I couldn't have been more wrong. My fears were totally unjustified. Every single issue we find we have material that just won't fit in! Other than the science fantasy upsurge which we'll be covering for elsewhere (first clue), more and more new horror films are appearing every week.

So, once again, we've got a jam-packed issue for you. An issue so full, we've had to lose *Answer Desk*, *Fan Scene* on Collecting, *Book and Magazine Reviews*, and half of our report on the *Pans Film Festival*. But next month, along with our adaptation of *One Million Years BC* (and back-up feature on *Lost World* *Moray*), we'll be covering *Suspense*, *Victor Frankenstein*, *Summer of Secrets* and *Nightmare in Blood*... from the *Pans Festival*. Plus an exclusive interview with veteran fantasy film actor John Cardoche, *Night of the Living Dead* director George A. Romero on his new vampire film, *Martin* (which *Tony Crowley* describes as 'top of the bunch of Carrae films'—see *Media Macabre*, page 16 this issue), a new *Van Helsing's Terror Tale*, *Orcs* (the *Dino de Laurentis* *Jaws* rip-off featuring Richard Harris vs. a leviathan killer whale), *Ruby* (Ng-por Laura, after her successful comeback as the mother of *Carrae*, in the title role of this *Carrae/Exorcist* thriller), *Would You Kill a Child* (a sort of combination of *Coman's Gas* and *Children of the Damned*) and the long-awaited details on how you can obtain your *HoH* Volume Binders.

See you in thirty.

*Ray Skinn*

Editor

# HAMMER HAPPENINGS

The results are now in, we've tabulated them, and so we now proudly present your opinions of what was best about *House of Hammer* 9.

1. **The Quatermass Experiment** by Lilley/Aldrich and Brian Lewis (116).
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8. **Media Macabre**. Film news by Tise Vahimagi (57).
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We weren't that surprised that you all voted the *Hammer* adaptation into a high place, giving it top marks on average, but the biggest shocks were in finding our new regular back-up feature on the film being adapted came so high (in this case *The Quatermass Story*), and our illustrated, home-made chills *Van Helsing's Terror Tales*. (Modesty prevents any editorial comment on the No. 4 placing.)

Thanks to all of you who actually sent in your ideas, suggestions and popularity polls, you've been an immense help. The prize we offered for anyone whose personal opinions matched the averaged-out opinion exactly hasn't been won by anyone, which is hardly surprising. But as Steven Whitaker of *Greenwich* and Andrew McCaffrey of *Dun-dee* got the first five right, we're awarding them free annual subscriptions to *HoH*, plus £2.50 each worth of free *Bargain Basement* items.

## SHRIEKS AND SPOOFS SUBSCRIPTION SECTION

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# PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES

CERTIFICATE X

A HAMMER FILM PRODUCTION  
WITH

ANDRE MORELL.....Sir James Forbes  
DIANE CLARE.....Sylvia  
BROOK WILLIAMS.....Dr. Peter Thompson

JACQUELINE PEARCE.....Alice  
JOHN CARSON.....Clive Hamilton

Directed by JOHN GILLING. Screen-  
play by PETER BRYAN; Produced  
by ANTHONY NELSON-KEYS.

Released by Warner-Pathe (USA):  
20th Century-Fox. Technicolor. 91  
minutes. 1966

Script by Steve Moore

Artwork by Trevor Goring & Brian Bolland





BUT THE FIRST THING THEY SEE IS MORE LL' ENOUGH THAN A ARKING WITH REBDS

"A FUNERAL!" WAS PETER JUST DRIVING IN HIS LETTER OR IS THERE REALLY SOME KIND OF SICKNESS HERE?



SICKNESS OF NO, THERE IS DEVILMENT HERE TODAY... AS THE HAWTERS RETURN, FURIOUS...

TRICKED, HEY? WELL, I KNOW A TRICK OR TWO AS WELL! NEARBY! OFF WITH YOU!

NO, SIR! DON'T WINDAN! WINDAN!

LOOK OUT!



AND IN THE CHAIRS THEY FOLLOWS...



FOR MORTUUS, THE DEAD MAN'S BROTHER, RAGE REPLACES GRIEF, BUT...

NO, MY SON! LET THEM GO! THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT THEM!



THEN, AS SOMETHING APPROACHING NORMALITY RETURNS...

"I'M DREADFULLY SORRY ABOUT THIS 'MY DAUGHTER AND I ARE HERE TO SEE DR. THOMPSON... BUT IF THERE'S ANYTHING WE CAN DO

"IF YOU CAN HELP THOMPSON FIND OUT WHAT'S CAUSING ALL THESE DEATHS BUT NO, THERE'S NOTHING TO BE DONE. THOMPSON'S HOUSE IS OVER THERE



A FEW PAGES BRING A REUNION WITH ALICE, STEWART'S OLDEST FRIEND, NOW ARRIVED TO PETER THOMPSON, ONCE SIR JAMES'S STAFF RUMOR...

SIR JAMES! STEWART! I WASN'T EXPECTING... YOU'D BETTER COME IN 'PETER'S NOT HERE AT THE MOMENT...

HOW ARE YOU KEEPING, ALICE?



WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR WRIST, ALICE? IS IT ALRIGHT?

IT'S NOTHING, SIR JAMES... AND PETER IS A DOCTOR 'HE SHOULD BE BACK SOON...

THE PLACE IS IN SUCH A MESS! IT'S NOT LIKE ALICE TO LET THINGS GO DOWN HILL THIS FAR

PETER JONSMAN RETURNING AT LAST, AND  
AFTER THE LOCALS WITHDRAW.



"YOU SAW THEM BURYING  
ANOTHER ONE TODAY, SIR JAMES.  
THAT'S AT LEAST TWELVE WHILE  
I'VE BEEN HERE! AND I CAN'T FIND  
THE CAUSE... I CAN'T EVEN SHOW  
YOU ANY WORTHWHILE RESULTS...

THE LOCALS DON'T LIKE MODERN  
MEDICINE! THEY PREFER TO THINK  
OF IT AS *AMISH* FLYER, AND THEY  
WON'T LET ME CARRY OUT POST  
MORTEMS! IT'S NO GOOD CUTTING  
'EM UP WHEN THEY'RE ALREADY  
DEAD", THEY SAY.



"WHAT? THAT'S  
ABSURD! WHAT ABOUT  
THE CORONER?"

THE CORONER IS THE  
LOCAL SQUIRE, HAMMILTON,  
AND HE DOESN'T GIVE A DAMN  
ABOUT ANYTHING. THERE'S  
NO WAY YOU'RE GOING TO  
GET A BODY TO WORK ON.



"PERHAPS THERE  
IS... WE CAN ALWAYS DO  
ONE UP! HIS YOUNG MAN  
WHO WAS BURIED TODAY,  
FOR INSTANCE."

FOR A MOMENT, JONSSON  
RECOILS IN HORROR AT THE  
IDEA... BUT THERE IS  
NOTHING ELSE TO BE DONE,  
AND LATER, IN THE  
GRAVEYARD...



"THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE  
LONG... THE EARTH HADN'T  
HAD TIME TO BE PACKED  
DOWN YET."

BUT IF WE'RE  
DISCOVERED...



NEW,  
ONE OR TWO  
SCREWS,  
AND...

"I CAN EXPLAIN,  
SERGEANT! WE  
ARE BOTH DOCTORS,  
AND...

"I DON'T CARE  
AND YOU ARE,  
SIR. THIS IS  
BODY-SNATCHING,  
AND...

"MY GOD!"

"THE BODY! IT'S  
GONE! THERE'S NOTHING  
HERE!"



"YOU MEAN THE  
COFFIN'S EMPTY?" BUT  
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I SAW  
HIM PUT DOWN THERE  
THIS AFTERNOON!

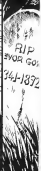
"AND I, SERGEANT,  
BUT HE'S GONE ALREADY...  
AND WITH HIM YOUR  
BODY-SNATCHING CHARGE  
HAS GONE TOO..."



THE ONLY THING TO DO  
IS FILL IN THE GRAVE,  
AND HURRY THINGS UP.  
FOR A WHILE AT LEAST  
THIS VILLAGE HAS ENOUGH  
TROUBLE AS IT IS.

"BUT WITHOUT  
MY REPORT FOR  
48 HOURS  
ANYWAY!"

"YOU GO HOME,  
SIR JAMES. WE'LL  
FINISH UP HERE..."











RELEASED BY ITS HORROR SHOCKS AND TURNS TO LEAVE. THE LIFELESS BODY ROLLS ONCE ON THE GROUND AND IS STILL.

ALICE!  
IT CAN'T BE  
NOT... DEAD?

WHILE EVELYN, LOST IN GRIEF, DOES NOT EVEN NOTICE THE UNDEAD ATTACKER AS IT DISAPPEARS SILENTLY AWAY.

ORDER BEYOND INSTANT, SILVER WITS AND NOW SHE'S RETURNING TO THE TOWNMAN'S HOUSE AND DIRECTLY AFTERWARDS, 'MURDER' MURDER NOW COMES BACK.

IT'S DONE  
EVERYTHING COVERED  
UP AND JUST AS IT  
WAS BEFORE...

HUCK, PETER!  
DRINK THIS... I'M  
STARTED I HAVE  
SOME SHOCKING  
NEWS!

IT'S EVELYN  
ALICE... I'M AFRAID  
SHE'S DEAD!

OH, GOD, NO! NOT  
AFTER ALL THE OTHERS!  
NOT HER! IT'S  
NOT TRUP!

I'M AFRAID IT IS...  
SILVER TOWN HIDE  
NEAR THE OLD MINE?  
WE WERE JUST GOING  
TO GET THE POLICE  
AGAIN.

AND SO...

IT WAS OVER  
THERE, SERGEANT,  
UP NEAR THE  
MINE...

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!  
OUT COLD AND  
STRAWING OF  
DARKNESS?

HOLD ON,  
SARGE! THERE'S  
SOMETHING  
WRE...!

AND THERE IS THE  
BODY! SHE'S DEAD  
ALL RIGHT!

COME ON,  
MARTINESS, WAKE  
UP! LET'S HAVE A  
WORD WITH YOU!

I SWEAR TO YOU,  
SERGEANT! I'VE GOT NOTHING  
TO DO WITH THIS! I DIDN'T  
EVEN SEE HER TONIGHT!

MAYBE YOU DON'T?  
OR MAYBE YOU DID! EITHER  
WAY, YOU'RE COMING DOWN  
TO THE STATION!

AND SO ALICE TOWNSEND RETURNED TO HER HOUSE... FOR THE LAST TIME. AND IN HER HUSBAND'S SURGERY.

VERY CURIOUS THIS ISN'T HUMAN BLOOD... IT'S ANIMALS! SHE HADN'T BEEN MURDERED!

NO... SHE DIED THE SAME WAY AS ALL THE OTHERS AND I LET HER DIE! I DIDN'T LOOK AFTER HER.

DON'T BE A FOOL, PETER! IF YOU COULDN'T SAVE THEM, YOU COULDN'T SAVE HER... BUT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SAVE OTHERS...

BUT SHE'S MY WIFE... AND SHE'S ONLY JUST DEAD... BUT YOU'RE RIGHT! IT'S GOT TO BE DONE...

THINK YOU... I KNOW THIS IS PAINFUL, BUT I'M GOING TO NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE...

WE NEED MORE INFORMATION, PETER, TO LIKE YOUR PERMISSION TO PERFORM AN AUTOPSY.

BUT, AFTER MANY HOURS OF PATIENT WORK...

NOTHING! ABSOLUTELY NO CLUE AS TO WHY SHE DIED AT ALL! THE ONLY THING WRONG WITH HER WAS THAT CUT ON HER WRIST!

THERE IS NOTHING MORE FOR PETER TO DO BUT MAKE THE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS. SUE JAMES, MEANWHILE, RETURNS TO THE POLICE STATION.

I TOLD YOU... I DIDN'T TOUCH HER. I PRINTED WHEN I SAW WHY MY OWN DEAD BROTHER... WALKING ABOUT ON THE MOORS, ALL GREY AND STARING, HE WAS

YOUR BROTHER? ARE YOU SURE, MAM? THE ONE IN THE COFFIN?

AND WHEN SYLVIA AWAKENS FROM A LONG EXHAUSTED SLEEP...

ARE YOU SURE? IT WAS THE ONE IN THE COFFIN... THE DEAD MAN?

LATER, AFTER THE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE, PETER AND SUE JAMES JOIN THE SERGEANT ON A SHORT EXPEDITION...

THE MINE'S CLOSED DOWN NOW, SUE, THOUGH IT'S SUPPOSED TO HAVE A VERY RICH VEIN OF TIN. BUT THERE WERE MANY ACCIDENTS. THE OLD SQUIRE HAD TO CLOSE IT DOWN. THE YOUNG SQUIRE HADN'T BOTHERED TO OPEN IT UP AGAIN...

DON'T KNOW WHERE THE SQUIRE GETS HIS MONEY FROM, HE INHERITED A LOT OF DEBTS, BUT A FEW MONTHS LATER HE WAS ENTERTAINING AND SPENDING MONEY LIKE WATER. CERTAINLY NOT FROM THE MINE!

HAH! AND NOW I SUPPOSE THE VILLAGERS SAY THE MINE'S HAUNTED!

WHY, YES, SIR! THEY DO SAY THAT! FANCY YOU KNOWING...

THERE'S FRESH OIL ON THIS CHAIN! EVEN IF THE LOCALS WON'T GO DOWN HERE, SOMEBODY DOES!

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# Media Macabre

## FILM SCENE news

### CANNES '77

... seemed more like a horror/fantasy festival than anything else. As an official, competition level, the event was a wash-out. So was the weather. And the final awards. In the haze of the film-market scene, however, horror ruled. Come '78 it's sure to be the hundred or more *Star Wars* rip-offs, take it from us. Hong Kong has already started with *Battle Wizards*.

On show: Jeff (Squirm) Lieberman's *Blue Sunshine*; David (Shivers) Cronenberg's *Rebeld*; Texas Chainsaw Massacre maker Tobe Hooper's all-star *Death Trap*. Japan had clips from a king-size beastie, *Legends of Dinosaurs and Monster Birds*—far more polished stop-motion stuff than America's weak *Crater Lake Monster*. Hong Kong went ape with a slant-eyed King Kong: *The Giant Peking Man*. Sweden unearthed Victor Frankenstein (not in *Ere*) Holland had blood relations, about very modern vampires with their own blood bank. Australia was ready *Plebia* for next year, and the same (U.S.) money-men are backing Peter Gubilla's science fantasy, *The Far Side of Forever*.

### A TELLY VISION

In near Hollywood, sporting open silk shirt, madalions, rings, sharp shades, galushed dome and far too much luck at the local casino, Telly Savalas—lately named horror director on his annual horus from lollipop-musak and Kajaki. His debut is *The Masi*. All his own work. About psychiatrist Nicholas Masi who thinks he knows it all until a hallucinogenic breakdown dumps him into a good vs. evil battle

Hot on the heels of *Star Wars* are a whole galaxy of sci-fi films. Currently in production are: *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (the film we previewed back in *Hell 10*); *Alien Encounters* (Roger Corman's retitled *God told Me To*); *Superman I & 2*; re-releases of the Paramount sci-fi biggies: *When Worlds Collide* & *War of the Worlds* (both George Pal productions); Pal himself is making a tv movie of the H. G. Wells story *On An A Cornet* (re-titled *In The Gays of the Cornet*). Pal is also sequelling his H. G. Wells adaptation *The Time Machine* as a feature film aptly titled *Return of the Time Machine* (see *Hell 11* for further details on this one).

*Star Trek* seemed to be one of the more confusing possibilities. First it was to be a feature film, with a new crew seeking out the old *Enterprise* ship, lost some-



where in the cosmos (cameos by the now high-ranking middle-aged Kirk, Spock et al.). Then,

Telly told us, 'It's a story I wrote. A concept of mine I wanted to put on screen. The concept being a diabolical one ... the devil taking the form of a very beautiful young girl. Patricia Barnes, who's gonna be a very big ... Yeah, Telly, sure—but what about the story?' 'Masi attacks evil concepts. Masi is a lament for the times that usta be. Masi cries out: We too wasna frighten, trillate, excite, like det.' Telly

## The Star Wake

when it was heard that *Star Wars* was breaking all records in the USA (biggest grosser since *Jaws* in its first week of release), plans were switched to go straight into a new tv series. The main reason this had not originally been done was the incredible costs in making the sets, effects, and such. It had been intended to make the sets for the movie, then use the same ones—basically—for a tv series, thus keeping tv costs within reasonable budget. Latest word though is that tv series is now off. No word on whether film is back on again.

Disney Productions' entry into the space race (for all you animal lovers) is ... *The Cat from Outer Space*. They also have another of project in the planning stages entitled *Space Probe*.

Universal is planning a remake of *The Thing from Another World* (the 1951 Howard Hawks film, starring James 'Glorious' Arness as the creature). They have also bought the rights to the old Buck Rogers tv serials as possible re-releases. Another 1950s sci-fi classic, *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, is under way as a remake, but this time with humor inserted.

Sir Lew Grade has made *Capricorn One*, about a phony rocket launch.

From various independent studios, we can look forward to such titles as *Spawn of the Slithis*, *End of the World*, *Gift From a Red Planet*, *Skywitch*, and a film version of Hal Lindsay's

best selling book *The Late, Great Planet Earth*.

And there's more ... Many old projects are being brought out of the cupboards, dusted off and re-examined. Rumour has it that



Milton Subatsky is intending to restart production on *The Micro-mans* (See *Hell 6*'s *Mafia Macabre* for further details on this £4 million project). Also being reconsidered are *Meteor* (see *Hell 3*), *Magne 1*, *Incredible Adventure*, *Timescape* (from Saul 'Lagan's Run' Owsel), *Rocket Ship X Flies Again*, and *Predictor*.

Several times, we've referred to the De Palma/Clarke team-up on a film adaptation of Clarke's *Childhood's End* novel. The latest is that it has now been scripted by Abraham Polonsky, and producer George Lito is currently trying to get production under way.

ought to change Masi's publicity. One line reads: 'A most shocking motion picture' ...

### LE FANU IS COMING

Earlier on the ears—Swedish-based American director Calvin Floyd. He tells us he's keeping his *Victor Frankenstein* star, Leon Vinall (from Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon*) for his next film, a free

adaptation of *The Son of the Flying Dutchman*, by that Irish master of the supernatural, Sheridan Le Fanu. Shooting in Germany and (like Victor F.) Iceland, in English, again like Victor, but costing around \$3,000,000. 'Set in the early 19th Century,' says Floyd, 'it will be intended as a mystery adventure with horror overtones.' You may remember it was Floyd who a few years back made Chris Lee's *In Search of*

# Media Macabre

Drecula TV documentary.

## LEE TIMES TWO

Christopher Lee was amazed (twice) in great clips from John Hayes' *End of the World*. Similar premise presented in *The Late Great Planet Earth* from Hal Lindsey's best-seller. Owen-follower also have some look-alikes in *Cathy's Curse* from Montreal, and both *The Child* and *The Redeemer*, from Los Angeles. Chris Lee is certainly busy in his new L.A. life-style: he hosts the veritable slaughterhouse of a movie, *Messiah: The Massacre*, a heavy scull tip which should destroy the similar sounding item, *The Axe*. Lee has

also completed *Alien Encounter* in Toronto with Robert Vaughan. This film carries a heavy notice: 'this picture is not *Close Encounters of The Third Kind*'. Whoever thought it was?

## TOP TEAM

Top of the Cannes bunch of films had to be George Romero's *Marino* (to be reviewed next issue). He also had the best news. The American cult horror figure, now firmly on the comeback trail, has joined forces with his exact opposite number in Italy, devilish Dario Argento. Thus far, a very hush-hush VIP project. More news—when George tells us. Their's is a teaming devoutly to

be wished.

## NEW COMBINE

In from almost nowhere and making like a major company within months. First American film—complete with Indian head emblem. We have to applaud their initial programme—18 movies in next to no time. Our favourites: *Death Game*, *Sisters of Death*, *Screen Bloody Murder* and *Marianne*. Most of which, if nothing else, give the ladies some good terror roles for once. Clint Eastwood's current favourite leading lady, Sondra Locke is in *Death Game*; Kitty Wase is *Marianne*—to name but two.

## FILM SOCIETY

The Gothique Film Society's 12th season starts this month. Among the films lined up for screening at their usual locale (The Holborn Library viewing theatre) are: *Death Line* (starring Christopher Lee and Donald Pleasence) and a double bill of Ted Browning's *Freaks* with the new Spanish film *Fraenkenstein's Castle of Freaks* (!).

Full details (in the form of the season's programme) will be sent out to anyone interested (along with the membership form). Write to: Robin James (secretary, Gothique Film Society), 75 Barro Ave., Feltham, Middlesex.

## Sword and Sorcery

Milton Subotsky, who used to head the Amicus organisation here, has announced that his company SWORD AND SORCERY PRODUCTIONS will start filming *Thongor* in the Valley of Demons in 1978. Based on the book by Lin Carter, it is the first of an anticipated series and it looks like the first will be directed by special effects genius Jim Danforth (of *Equinox*, *Jack the Giant Killer*, *Flesh Gordon* and *Hammer's When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* fame). The film will be crammed full of non-stop animation monsters such as dragons, flying lizard-hawks, giant spiders, dinosaurs and many more. Musclemann Arnold Schwarzenegger was approached to star but it seems he'll be playing Conan instead, the property just bought by Ed Pressman (The Producer of *Carré*). Subotsky wants the film to be similar in feel to the Sabu version of *The Thief of Baghdad*.

The soon to be released *The Uncanny* is another Subotsky film based on

his anthology *Beware of the Cat*. The film is three stories linked by another directed by Denis Heroux and its original title was *Brrrrr*.

Subotsky's script *The Cat People* is to be made in Canada. It's a remake of Val Lewton's masterpiece from the forties.

Another film to be made in Canada is what Subotsky feels is the nearest he or anyone else has come to matching Henri Clouzot's masterpiece *Diables* (*The Fiends*). Called *Dominique*, it's based on a story entitled *What Beckoning Ghost*. This had previously been filmed for television as one of the more dramatic episodes of the 1963 *Thriller* series which was hosted by Boris Karloff. *Dominique* will be the first picture to be made in Montreal's huge new studios, with filming starting this October.

Then there's *The Monster Club* based on the stories of R. Chetwynd-Hayes (His stories were used for the other Amicus movie *From Beyond The*



*Greve*). This will be a three story anthology the last story being called *My Mother Married a Vampire*.

*Night of the Crebs* has been turned into a script called *King Crab*. Based on the book by Guy N. Smith, Subotsky intends to use puppet animation intercut with magnified live crabs.

Just having lost his option on *The Incredible Hulk* (which is now being made as a television cartoon series by Universal in America), Subotsky is making a deal with Jim Warren to turn the best of the *Creepy* and *Eerie* stories

into a film similar to his *Tales of the Crypt* success.

Last but not least Milton Subotsky will soon, in conjunction with Corgi books, be setting up a competition to find new writing talent and horror stories. All entrants will be given a year to submit their stories and the first prize will be £1,000 for the option to make a film and a further £10,000 if the film is made—and that doesn't even include book royalties! So all you HOUSE OF HAMMER readers—now's your chance! Watch for details in future issues —Alan Jones

# THE UNCANNY

Review by John Brosnan

What a relief to see a good, old-fashioned horror film again. After the unremitting seriousness (and pretentiousness) of films like *The Omen*, *Burnt Offerings* and *The Sentinel* etc, it's really refreshing to come across a horror film that doesn't take itself seriously—a film that doesn't pretend to be anything other than a jokey horror comic. And the word "comic" is significant in relation to *The Uncanny* because it's produced by Milton Subotsky, the man who made *Tales from the Crypt* and *Vault of Horror* both of which were based on the old EC horror comics. *The Uncanny* has many similarities to those earlier films, and to emphasise the point various characters are seen reading comics during the film.

Like many of the horror films that Subotsky produced for Amicus Films, *The Uncanny* is an anthology form with three separate stories linked by an overall connecting story. In this case the main theme concerns cats and in the linking story Peter Cushing plays an eccentric author trying to persuade a doubtful publisher (Ray Milland) to accept his book about the dangers that cats represent towards mankind; in fact he believes that there is a vast conspiracy among cats and they are using Man for their own evil purposes (as any cat owner can readily testify). To illustrate his warning he tells the publisher three different stories about cats doing nasty things to people, though with good reason in each case. The first is a somewhat conventional tale about a rich old lady who lives with a huge horde of cats until she is murdered by her maid. Her cats are very annoyed by this and first trap the girl in a pantry for several days before they... well, it gets pretty gruesome. The second story is also very familiar but rather more fun—a small girl is orphaned when her parents are killed in a 'plane crash and goes to live with her rich, snooty relatives, her only real friend being her cat 'Wellington'. But her



Janet (Savva Penhaligon), clawed and slashed by hissing cats arms herself with a knife in an endeavour to make her escape from Miss Mulkin's bedroom.

cousin, a girl a few years older, is an embryonic bitch of the first order and conspires to have poor old Wellington carted off to a place-of-no-return. Wellington, however, does return because he is no ordinary cat but a witch's familiar, the little girl's mother having been an exponent of the Black Arts. The cat and the girl, who has inherited some of her mother's skills, decide to take their revenge on the older cousin and achieve this by shrinking her to the size of a mouse. After some cat-and-mouse games (sorry) the cousin, not surprisingly, repents and apologises for all her vile

behaviour and for a moment it seems apparent that a mutually happy ending will take place but it's here that Subotsky and Michel Parry pull a small surprise and the story ends on a suitably sick note.

The third episode is the most enjoyable and has Donald Pleasence hamming it up as a second-rate horror star (reminiscent of the character played by Jon Pertwee in the *Dracula's Cape* segment of Subotsky's *The House That Dropped Blood*) who murders his wife by first switching the fake blade on a movie prop for a real one and then, in a





Above left: De'Ath (Donald Pleasence) rehearses with Edina (Samantha Eggar) for the *Iron Maiden* sequence of the film they are making together. Above right: Wilbur Grey (Peter Cushing) screams in horror as he is attacked by one of the vicious cats



Wallace finds Michael's body with the face and throat hideously assailed.

scene similar to the climax in Coenman's *Pit* and the *Pendulum*, neatly bisecting her while the film crew calmly watch on. His plan is to have his wife replaced in the starring role by his giggly mistress (played by Samantha Eggar, obviously having a good time) but his late wife's cat takes exception to all of this, particularly when Pleasence flushes her newly-born kittens down the toilet (an action which mercifully takes place off-screen) and it's not long before something unpleasant happens to both the mistress and him. As the vain Valentine Death (he has his initials "VD" monogrammed on his pyjamas) Pleasence is very amusing and we can only guess which actor his performance is modelled upon, but the episode is spoiled by some really corny jokes built around the word "cat", and as for final sequence when someone asks: "What's the matter, cat got your tongue?"... well, it's something of a catastrophe.

The *Uncanny*, one can safely say, is good, clean, nasty fun. Its stories may consist of well-worn formulas and its characters may be constructed out of the thinnest of cardboard but it provides the sort of pleasure you get by picking up a favourite old comic book that you haven't seen in several years. My main quibble is about the obvious

haste in which it was made—there are far too many shots of annoyed cats tethered at the ends of very evident lengths of black string—and I do wish someone had told Joan Greenwood, who plays the rich old lady, that her brown hair was protruding from the back of her white wig.

## THE UNCANNY

### Link Story

Peter Cushing (as Wilbur) and

Ray Milland (as Frank)

### Minkie Story

Susan Penhaligon (as Janet); Joan Greenwood (Miss Minkie); Simon Williams (Michael); Roland Culver (Wallace)

### Black Magic Story

Alexandra Stewart (as Mrs Blake); Ghosie Franks (Angela); Katrina Holden (Lucy); Donald Fison (Mr Blake); Renee Girard (Mrs. Milland)

### Film Studio Story

Donald Pleasence (as De'Ath); Samantha Eggar (Edina); John Vernon (Pomeroy); Sean McCann (Inspector); Jean LeClerc (Barrington); Catharine Bavin (Madeline). Directed by Denis Heaton; Produced by Claude Heroux and Rene Dupont; Story and Screenplay by Michel Parry.

A Claude Heroux-Milton Sobiesky Production. Released by Rank.



*Godzilla and Angaras (both in bottom right of picture) appear quite indifferent to the presence of their opponents.*

Review by John Brosnan

**T**his is the sort of movie that, while you're watching it, makes you start thinking of all the more constructive things you could be doing with your time—such as pushing a sharp, pointed stick into your left ear or watching *The Generation Game* on TV.

I'm probably getting old but the sight of Japanese stuntmen in funny costumes throwing each other for what seems eternity doesn't give me much of a kick. My mind keeps wandering in other directions—like what the conditions are like inside those monster suits. Are they as hot and uncomfortable as they appear to be? How often do the stuntmen get a break and a cold drink? Are they well paid? Is wearing a Godzilla suit for a living something to brag about in Japan or do you keep quiet about it out of working hours? And what happens when the monster you play—say the giant turnip creature from beyond the moon—becomes unfashionable and is dropped from the studio's all-star line-up? What do you do then? Save face by tying a rock around your neck and stepping into the deep end of the Toho Studio special effects tank?

It's all very interesting, which is more than one can say for *War of the Monsters*, one of Toho's more recent efforts and currently on release in this country. They have been churning out these films since *Godzilla* (*Gojira* in Japan) first breathed fire in 1954 and over the years they have become increasingly silly and tedious. Originally *Godzilla* was your run-of-the-mill giant prehistoric monster on the rampage but these days he's more like Puff the Magic Dragon, residing on an island with all his monster friends and given to growling things like: "Come on, Angurir, we've got work to do."

### Cockroaches from Space

Toho's special effects have also become rather perfunctory with no attempt to integrate the human actors with the monsters, with the result that you get the impression you are watching two separate films, their only connection being sheer awfulness.

As for the plot of *War of the Monsters* . . . well, you see there are these two cockroaches from outer space and—(are you sure you want me to go on?)—they disguise themselves as a teenage boy and his uncle

# GO WAR OF MON

respectively, then they open a monster fun park in which the dominating feature is a huge, hollow statue of *Godzilla*.

A young cartoonist, seeking a job at the fun park, encounters a girl who is searching for her missing brother—a technician employed at the park. She hasn't found him but has managed to steal a reel of mysterious tape. When it's played it wakes up the monsters on *Monster Island*, including *Godzilla* who sends his buddy *Angurir* (who resembles a large, spiky turtle) to investigate. But *Angurir* is met on the beach by the Japanese Defence Corps (apparently formed to defend Japan against monsters) and is sent packing with an atomic hot-foot back to *Monster Island*.

Meanwhile the tape has been recovered by the cockroaches—disguised as humans—and they use it to summon two monsters from *Space-M*

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(whatever that is). One of them is a three-headed dragon and the other is . . . well, it's sort of hard to describe but it has a long saw protruding from its stomach so that gives you some idea. Of course they immediately set about destroying Tokyo (the residents of Tokyo are obviously accustomed to this sort of thing now because they don't even bother to come out into the streets—there's not a sign of anyone while all this is going on) but Godzilla and Anguirus come to the rescue and after a long, long fight the alien monsters are beaten and the cockroaches crushed beneath the rubble of their fun park.

And to think some people have the nerve to say that the cinema is a dying art . . .

#### WAR OF THE MONSTERS

starring Misora Takemitsu,  
Hisako Ichikawa, Tomoko Umeda,  
A Miracle Film Presentation.

Time: 85 mins.

Cost: A

*Above: The dreaded Bazu-ame Monster performs a dance routine and (inset) gleeful Cockroaches and cowering populace watch the battle's progress.*

Review by Tise Vahimagi

The scene is Bowen Tyler hurling a cannibal into the sea, and remaining marooned on the island of Caprona, saw out the last seconds of *The Land That Time Forgot* and left the gate open for a sequel.

Now, four years later, AIP brings forth the exciting follow-up, *The People That Time Forgot*, with enough sparks to keep the most unimaginative alarmed. Primarily aimed at the juvenile audience, *The People That Time Forgot* should appeal to most factions due to its rapid pace and colourful action.

Directed by Kevin Connor (he who gave you the previous excursion as well as *From Beyond the Grave*), Patrick Tilley's screen-play sweeps the thrilling story along with the vigour of a *Flash Gordon* serial, stopping only to breath between hazards. The period is 1919, and Tyler's friend Ben McElride (Patrick Wayne), newspaper photographer Charly (Sarah Douglas), biologist Norfolk (Thorley Walters) and World War One airplane mechanic

# The PEOPLE That TIME FORGOT

Hogan (Shane Rimmer) are on their way in search of Tyler and the lost island of Caprona.

They find Caprona, and along with it a monstrous menagerie of dinosaurs, hostile tribes, and the deadly City of Skulls. On arrival the expedition comes across a beautiful primitive girl, Ajor

(Dana Galligan), who knew Tyler and is coaxed into travelling with them.

The party's first encounter with the enormous dangers of Caprona arrives in the form of a gigantic Pterodactyl which attacks their amphibious, an early form of flying-boat. After barely surviving several further dangers, they



The obese Sabbala (Hilton Reid), deep in thought on his skull throne, is watched by his dwarf familiar, Balam (Kiran Shah).



A grim band of Na-Ga warriors advance along the rim of a volcano on their way to intercept the unsuspecting expedition.



are captured by a small army of Sumner-like warriors—the ferocious Na-gas—and are taken to the forbidding City of Skulls, located high on the rim of an active volcano.

If all this seems reminiscent of Undersea Kingdom or Phantom Empire, then you have the picture pretty well tied down. The adventures come stockpiled in the tradition of *The Lost World* and *Conan of Cimmeria*, and utilize all manner of weaponry from machine-guns to swords. The special effects are quite suitable, for this type of film, but

the camera cuts in on too many close-ups when it comes to the monsters. The use of make-up, as in the previous film, is still impressive without being intrusive.

The only possible negative note in this picture must be Thorley Walter's silly naive dialogue: "Look, it's a Pterodactyl!", as the massive thing swoops towards him, and "Look, a Stegosaurus!", when one comes rumbling along. The central characters, however, are pretty much stock types, with Wayne doing quite a successful impersonation of Buster Crabbe, right down to the aviator outfit. However, when Wayne latches onto a sword, and dives into combat, one feels that he must have used this film as a training ground for his upcoming *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*.

#### McCLURE'S APPEARANCE

One of the most pleasing aspects is that Doug McClure puts in a special appearance as Bowen Tyler—his head now covered with long hair and a furry beard. With the addition of Tyler, this now sets the stage for a climactic battle between the dreaded Na-gas and our two heroes in the ceremonial chamber of the City of Skulls. An added pleasure, by way of action, is muscleman Dave Prowse as a black-headed executioner, complete with oversized sword.

The whole development of *People That Time Forgot* is very much along the same lines as a 1930's Saturday-morning Serial: each new scene holds an assortment of terrifying dangers. In trying to come up with an action-filled, thrilling picture for the Summer season, AIP have scored in all departments with *The People That Time Forgot*. If this film had been made some 40 years ago it would have succeeded as a splendid serial, possibly the product of an outfit such as Mascot or Universal. And that's a compliment. ■



Above (left to right) McBride (Patrick Wayne), Ajjar (Dana Gillespie), Charly (Sarah Douglas) and Norfolk (Thorley Walters) flee before the terror of an erupting volcano. Inset, Tyler (Doug McClure) protects Ajjar from Na-Gas.

**SPECIAL  
PREVIEW**

# STAR WARS

feature by Alan Frank



**S**tar Wars looks like becoming the biggest-ever box-office film success.

In its first six days on release in only 41 cinemas in the United States it has grossed a staggering \$2.5 million: judging from costastic audience reaction, that experience is likely to be repeated when the film goes out on general release and Star Wars will probably replace *Jaws* as the most profitable movie ever. Which is pretty good for a film that was once nearly scrapped by 20th Century-Fox executives who feared that Star Wars would not even cover its costs! Now a jubilant Fox executive is quoted as saying "It's madness. The queues at the cinemas are unbelievable."

The one man who always believed in the film is writer-director George Lucas. His previous record seemed lightweight for him to be entrusted with

some \$9.5 million for Star Wars: his first film had been a neat little s-f film, *THX 1138*, an extension of an amateur film he had made while still a student. That had led to Universal financing *American Graffiti*, which became the eleventh highest grosser of all time. Despite that, when Lucas offered them *Star Wars* in the form of a twelve page outline, Universal were unwilling to take a chance.

#### Fox take up the challenge

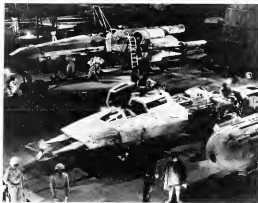
It was left to 20th Century-Fox to take up the project: two years and four versions later, Lucas had his screenplay and was ready to begin filming. The perfect location to depict another planet in another galaxy was finally found in the dry arid desert landscape of Tunisia and in March 1976 filming

began on the Chott el Ejerid, whose bare wastelands formed the ideal landscapes for the barren planet of Tatooine, later moving on to the bizarre towns of Matmata, largely inhabited by troglodytes living in caves cut from the sides of the crater-like holes in the ground. Following two and a half weeks of location work in Tunisia, filming continued in Britain's Elstree Studios for 15 weeks. The unique special effects were completed in Los Angeles during a year of post-production work while second-unit teams completed location filming in Death Valley and Guatemala. The result: *Time* magazine has called Star Wars 'The year's best movie' and even hardened critics have been bowled over by its incredible special effects.

Star Wars is a movie whose synopsis gives only the merest impression of its



*The Space war heroes' Chewbacca the Wookiee, Luke Skywalker the sky-eyed innocent (Mark Hamill), Obi-Wan Kenobi the last of the Jedi Knights (Alec Guinness), and Han Solo the noble and tough pilot of fortune (Harrison Ford)*



overwhelming impact. It's a riveting mixture of suspense and swashbuckling adventure with the finest special effects ever to be seen in the cinema. It's a stunning amalgam of the great comic strip and serial heroes—Flash Gordon, Buck Rogers and Beick Bradford—combined with elements of war and pirate movies, the Errol Flynn swashbucklers of the '30s and '40s, *The Wizard of Oz* and just about every western ever made. It even has that rarity in the cinema, a happy ending. *Star Wars* is, simply, mind-stretching and magnificent entertainment that makes all previous genre movies pale into insignificance.

The adventures of its hero, Luke Skywalker, range across unknown galaxies and strange new worlds in scenes that only the cinema could imagine, let alone make real. When the rebel princess Leia Organa is captured by the arch-villains of the Galactic Empire, Darth Vader and the Grand Moff Tarkin, she manages to steal the plans of the Empire's secret and impregnable weapon, the Death Star, which can destroy whole planets with a single burst of lethal energy. She entrusts the plans to the robot R2-D2 in order to get them to former rebel general Ben Kenobi on the far planet of Tatooine. Fortunately the plans fall into the hands of the resourceful farmer Luke Skywalker who joins forces with the general, the robot Artoo Detoo (R2-D2) and his robot friend Threepio (C3PO) and together they set out across the galaxies



*Above left and centre: some of the marvellous space war ships that, in construction alone, make Star Wars the first film comparable to 2001.*

to rescue the princess and foil Darth Vader and the Grand Moff Tarkin. Their incredible adventures and blazing action—and there's plenty of it—form the basis of the most amazing film ever conceived as they join forces with space pilots, outlaws, robots and the strange furry Wookiee to thwart evil in the finest

#### 2001 . . . light years behind

traditions of the cinema. After battling with many bizarre and terrifying creatures, they reach their objective and the movie climaxes with a stunning tour de force of special effects and action in the stupendous space conflict over the Death Star.

But *Star Wars* is considerably more than just the sum of its plot and special effects. It is total and mesmerising

entertainment, unlike 2001, the film with which it will inevitably be compared. Where 2001 was a special effects movie in search of a plot, *Star Wars* is completely satisfying and leaves Kubrick's film light years behind in every aspect.

The stunning special effects employed in the film seem almost inconceivable, even in these days of the sophistication of film techniques. Lucas and John Dykstra (an expert in special photographic effects) used a sophisticated calculator linked to their camera which recorded and memorised every shot. Valuable time was saved when new elements had to be added, merely by consulting the calculator, instead of having to rely on the time-consuming and relatively restrictive multiple exposure effects and composite opticals





The sure favorites of the film. Left, R2-D2. Creative, C-3PO. Rumor has it that these two robots will be the main stars of the film's sequel.

that Kubrick had used for 2001.

Not only were the special effects completed in far less time but the results are infinitely superior to anything ever seen on the screen. "We have spaceships crossing over planets all the time," says John Dykstra, "And Kubrick never did. His ships are almost invariably linear and can only be seen from one angle. Ours are seen in all conditions and from all angles." 2001 cost \$10 million in the '60s when the dollar was worth a great deal more than it is today. Despite this, *Star Wars* came in at the relatively puny figure of \$9.5 million, and has 363 different effects, compared with 2001 having about 35! Comparisons may be invidious, but *Star Wars* is a faster-than-light vessel in comparison with Kubrick's interplanetary spaceship.

Lucas's invention extends far beyond photographic effects. His robots are the finest to reach the screen, the first to

have real personalities of their own. Inside Artoo Detoo, the midget robot that plays Laurel to Threepio's Hardy is 3 foot 8 inches tall Kenny Baker, described by Production Designer John Barry as "the smallest man in England". Baker was able to operate Artoo Detoo from inside, fitting his legs into the robot's and with lights he could switch on and off. Inside the towering and unique figure of Threepio, a golden robot constructed of plastic, rubber, fibre-glass, steel and aluminium was actor Anthony Daniels, who nearly expired under the heat of the Tunisian sun, when the machine's plastic and rubber joints were in danger of melting. To create the furry Wookiee, Chewbacca, co-pilot of the space freighter that fights the climatic battle over the Death Star, London hospital porter Peter Mayhew, already over 7 feet tall followed in the footsteps of Karloff by being made even taller with thick boots and a built-up head mask.

#### Enter... Uglies Limited

Lucas has also included a magnificent menagerie of monsters in the very finest traditions of the genre. In order to stage a free-wheeling brawl in the rough cantina where the heroes lure Chewbacca and the tough star pirate Han Solo, a brawl that recalls the best of the western saloon fights, the London agency Ugles Limited supplied a roster of evil heavies, transformed by make-up man Stuart Freeborn into villains from all over the universe, a group of grotesques that is both unique and like an anthology of all the '50s monster movies.

In less confident hands, the human actors could have been dwarfed by the fascinating parade of robes and grotesques, of science-fiction hardware, bizarre locations and the stunning special effects. It is to Lucas's credit that the actors emerge as very real people, heroes to be cheered and villains to be hissed. Peter Cushing gives a typically incisive and ruthless performance as Grand Moff Tarkin, the Governor of the Impenetrable Outer Regions; Alec Guinness commands as the rebel general Ben Kenobi; Carrie Fisher portrays a princess eminently worth crossing uncharted space to rescue. As Luke Skywalker, Mark Hamill provides a hero, resourceful and valiant in the traditions of Flash Gordon and Errol Flynn. And, if in the end the villainous Darth Vader, personifying all the evil



*The villainous Grand Moff Tarkin (Peter Cushing), flanked by Lord Darth Vader (played by another Hammer regular, Dave Prowse; master of both *Horror of Frankenstein* and *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell*). Together these arch-villains interrogate the lovely Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher).*

of the Galactic Empire, manages to make his escape, it's in our own best interests: With millions of planets available for him to begin his depredations once more, George Lucas is already planning a sequel to *Star Wars*.

What does *Star Wars* mean to its creator George Lucas? For him, the film is the story of the fantasy life he experienced as a boy. "I wasted four years of my life cruising like the kids in *American Graffiti*," he says. "Now, in *Star Wars* I'm telling the story of me. It's fun . . . that's the word for this movie. I want to open up the whole realm of space. Science-fiction is okay, but it got so involved with science that it forgot the sense of adventure. I want *Star Wars* to make an audience think of things that could happen. I want *Star Wars* to give people a faraway, exotic environment for their imaginations to run free. I have a strong feeling about interesting people in space exploration. I want them to get beyond the basic stupidities of the moment and think about colonizing Venus and Mars. And the only way it's going to happen is to have some kid fantasize about getting his ray gun, jumping into his spaceship and flying off into outer space."

The film was born of Lucas's passion for the *Flash Gordon* serials he first saw on television and from his abiding love

of science-fiction and space fantasy, added to his enthusiasm for all kinds of adventure stories. *Star Wars* is the magnificent synthesis of all these passions, a revival of the realm of mythological fantasy that died when the western died.

"I wanted," continues Lucas, "to make an action movie in outer space, characters with ray guns, running around in spaceships and shooting at each other. I knew, too, that I wanted to have a big battle in outer space, a sort of dogfight thing." To achieve that battle, the climax of *Star Wars* which has had even hardened critics cheering,

#### SF . . . as in Space Fantasy

Lucas prepared by getting hold of every old war movie he could find, and splicing their aerial combat footage together. "We did that," he says, "to get an idea of how to set up this scene. It was all very difficult, with the most complicated sound problems, mixing and special effects." The stunning ten minute sequence, edited by Lucas's wife Marcia, took eight weeks to edit. In ordinary circumstances, 105 minutes of a Lucas movie could have been edited in that time. But then, nothing about *Star Wars* is ordinary.

Says Lucas, "I think that anyone who goes to the movies loves to have an

emotional experience. It's basic—whether you're seven, seventeen or seventy. The more intense the experience, the more successful the film. I'm trying to reconstruct a genre that's been lost and bring it to a new dimension so that the elements of space, fantasy, adventure, suspense and fun all work and feed off each other."

The incredible impact of *Star Wars* has proved George Lucas to be correct. With the exception of a hard-core monster movie like *Jaws*, and the horror-fantasy films typified by *The Exorcist* and *The Omen*, the genre has always been very much a private affair between its films and their devotees. *Star Wars* exerts a fascination and appeal that extends far beyond the traditional fans of the genre, because it is a gripping story of adventure and suspense containing some of the most ingenious special effects and imaginative sequences ever seen in the cinema. By the time the film opens in this country at the end of 1977, no doubt *Star Wars* will have spawned a myriad of imitators—but Lucas's film will prove pretty difficult to match.

The last word belongs to the film's producer Gary Kurtz. "Star Wars," he says, "is not science-fiction, but *space fantasy*. Space fantasy allows you more rein to say what you want to say." And *Star Wars* says it stunningly. ■

In issue 9, we asked you for your ideas on future issues of *HoH*; what you thought we should, or shouldn't include, and what you think of the sort of features we are currently running.

The number of good suggestions we received was astonishing, so here are a few of them...

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#### HoH

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Before I got House of Hammer, I used to buy *Monster Mag*, which I thought was great. Why not combine the two (as you edited both) and have a poster in *HoH*?

Christopher Thomas, Carmarthen

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#### HoH

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Captain Kronos (in *HoH* 1, 2 and 3) didn't grab me much, but *Van Helsing's Terror Tales* (especially "Food For Thought" in *HoH* 8, and "Swamp Fever" in *HoH* 3) must be the greatest thing since sliced bread. Give it more pages.

Mike Judge, White City, London

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#### HoH

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Your best adaptation so far has been *Dracula*, Prince of Darkness in *HoH* 6 and the worst was *Moon Zero Two* in *HoH* 5. Please stick to gothic horror, not science fiction.

Gary Chedgray, Liverpool

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#### HoH

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In American mags, they have a few pages where you can buy things like horror LP records, films, masks, posters, models, etc. I think you should do more, instead of just back issues.

Shaun Coyle, Shildon

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#### HoH

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The film posters you are running on the back covers are great. Keep them coming. Also, bring back *Kronos*, *Vampire Hunter*, and include *Van Helsing's Terror Tales* in every issue.

Peter Collins, Huyton

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#### HoH

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*Van Helsing's Terror Tale* "Food For Thought" in *HoH* 9 had a great twist ending and kept me in suspense right the way through. More like it, please. I really enjoyed the adaptation of *The Quatermass Experiment*, too, the artwork made the monster look just as frightening as in the film. Keep up the features on films you adapt, they help me understand the film more.

Gary Stegger, Ferryhill

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#### HoH

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Have a pen-pal and swap shop page. Run an article on how a horror film is



made, telling us about the jobs of the scriptwriter, make-up man, director, etc. I would also like to see an article on Japan's giant monster films, and one on the special effects work of Ray Harryhausen. The miniature film posters you use on the back cover are great.

Gary Dawson, Birtley

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#### HoH

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I really enjoy *Van Helsing's Terror Tales*, please make them longer. Your best so far was "The Midnight Coach" in *HoH* 8. Please adapt *One Million Years BC* and *The Mummy's Shroud* soon. I saw them on the television and they were great. Also *Blood From The Mummy's Tomb*.

Robert D. Hutchinson, Spennymoor

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#### HoH

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I think it would be great if you could have a list of new books published every month, and features on witchcraft and voodoo.

J. Johnson, Beamley

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#### HoH

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Do an article on the history of Hammer Films, including all their pictures from first to latest, with information on the actors and directors who were connected with them. I'd also like to see competitions, where readers can test their knowledge of Hammer Films, with the answers to the quiz in the back of the magazine.

Stewart Jolley, Bromborough

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#### HoH

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I find your magazine of the highest standard, especially *Van Helsing's Terror Tales*, please make them longer. Also I think you should have a small pin-up in the centre pages. I think this would be very effective.

Gary Rugless, Harlow

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#### HoH

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Diversify your content more, by concentrating on Hammer Films it narrows the field. Also smarten up the

covers (more like *HoH* 3—not a seed catalogue). Concentrate on quality (no more disreputable and violent stuff like *Van Helsing's* "The Midnight Coach" strip). Sorry if I sound hyper-critical, I still think *HoH* is damn good. Certainly the high spot of my month!

Mark Chapman, Allerton

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#### HoH

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How about including each month a pull-out centrefold depicting in colour some scene from a horror movie, or perhaps a famous horror actor (on glossy paper preferably). I think you could also get the best of both worlds with typed fiction and illustrated strip fiction by handing *Van Helsing's Terror Tales* over to a story-writer with perhaps a few illustrations, whilst keeping up the high standard of comic strips in your film adaptations.

Keith Shepherd, Upminster

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#### HoH

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I think *Van Helsing's Terror Tales* are very original and fast class. My favourites so far being "Swamp Fever" and "Midnight Coach". But there is one thing I do not like. I wish you would put all your advertisements at the back of the magazine instead of throughout it. This way they would not distract from good stories. Please carry on doing your *Monster Galleries*, and include them as often as possible. I am glad you took out *Captain Kronos*, I thought it was weak and ineffective.

John Cyase Jr., Dorking

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#### HoH

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And they're just a few of the letters I We could have given the whole issue over to *Post Mortem* this month and still have some mail left over. (more of your suggestions next month). To all who've asked, we'd like to include colour posters in the centrespread, but it would mean the cover price would go up, as it would obviously cost more to print colour inside. We're trying to keep the magazine easily within everybody's pocket, even at the expense of colour. In answer to Shaun Coyle, we prefer articles and strips to too many pages of repeat ads. To John Chase, we integrate the ads to act as "chapter breaks" in long strips, also we prefer to finish the magazine with a short illustrated horror story (*Van Helsing's Terror Tales*) rather than pages of house advertisements. To Mark Chapman, we thought we were diversifying our content too much, so we're covering more Hammer (history and interviews) in upcoming issues. To everyone else who has written in "thank you".

# Plague Of The Zombies

## Part Two:

## 'THE SACRIFICE'

MEANWHILE



LATER, WHEN THE TIME FOR ALICE'S FUNERAL ARRIVES...



AND, AT THE CHURCHYARD...



AS THE SERVICE DRAWS TO A CLOSE...

PETER: I'M FEELING RATHER FRANT. TAKE ME HOME...

A WORD WITH YOU, VICAR, IF I MAY, IT'S VERY IMPORTANT!



IT IS SEVEN HOURS BEFORE SIR JAMES RETURNS AFTER HIS CONSULTATION WITH THE PRIEST...

WE'VE GOT THE FINISHER, PETER! IT'S TERRIBLE! YOU'VE HEARD OF WOODCO? SOMEONE IS PRACTISING IT IN THIS VILLAGE...



BUT, AS THE HOURS DRAG BY...

GO HOME, VICAR! YOU'VE A FEW TOO MANY YEARS UNDER YOUR BELT FOR STAYING UP ALL NIGHT!



THE OLD CLERGYMAN SHUFFLES CLEVERLY AWAY TWO SILENT PAGES.

ADAM! WHAT IN...

LISTEN! THAT'S THE VICAR'S VOICE! HE MUST BE IN TROUBLE! COME ON!





WITH A HIDEOUS BUSTLE OF DRIVEN  
JOHN AND DECAYING ZOMBIES  
THEY SHAMBLE SLUGGISHLY FORWARD,  
EAGER TO HAVE ANOTHER OF THE  
LIVING JOIN THEM IN DEATH.

AAAAAACH!  
NO! NO...!

BUT THEN, IN AN INSTANT,  
THERE IS NOTHING!

WAKE UP PETER,  
YOU'RE HAVING A  
NIGHTMARE - IT'S  
JUST A DREAM!

WHAT? ALL OF  
IT? RUICE?

NO, THAT PART WAS  
TRUE, I'M AFRAID, BUT  
SHE'S BEEN FORGOTTEN  
AND REBURIED.

BUT I DREAMED... THEY  
WERE ALL ZOMBIES!  
EVERY BODY IN THE  
CHURCHYARD WAS  
EMPTY...

AND THE DREAM TURNS OUT TO  
BE ONLY TOO PROPHETIC...

NOTHING IN ANY  
OF THEM! WHERE HAVE  
THEY ALL GONE?

SARGE! MARTINUS... HE'S  
ESCAPED! HE CUT HIMSELF WHEN  
HAMILTON VISITED, AND TORE HIS  
WAY OUT WITH HIS BARE HANDS!

GOOD LORD! IT  
ALL FITS... THE ZOMBIES  
HAMILTON... THE CUTS!

THE SUN IS  
GETTING AS HOT  
JAMES ALWAYS  
TOWARD A  
FATEFUL MEETING...

HAMILTON'S  
MINING THE  
TIN SECRETLY  
AND GETTING  
IT FREE. YOU  
DON'T PAY  
WAGES TO  
ZOMBIES!

BUT HE'S  
GETTING  
GREEDY, AND  
KILLING EVERY-  
ONE IN THE  
VILLAGE SO  
THEY CAN  
WORK FOR HIM!

SO BACK TO THE HOUSE  
KEEP SILVIA THERE, I'M  
GOING TO SEE HAMILTON!

DESPERATE NOW, SIR  
JAMES FINDS HE HAS  
A NEW TALENT,  
HOUSEBORROWING!

AND INSIDE...

THERE'S  
HAMILTON - AND  
IT LOOKS LIKE  
HE'S JUST ABOUT  
TO START HIS  
DANCE RITUAL!

HE'S DRUGGING THEM  
SOME UNTRACEABLE VENOM  
GIVEN WHEN HE CUTS THE  
VICTIM! I'VE GOT TO STOP  
HIM BEFORE SILVIA  
SUCCUMBS...

THEN, FOR A COUPLE OF  
MINUTES, THERE IS  
SILENCE, SUMMERING  
HIS COURAGE, SIR  
JAMES ENTERS THE  
ROOM...

GONE! AND  
THERE'S NO OTHER  
WAY OUT OF THIS  
ROOM! BUT THERE'S  
PROOF. I NEED  
THOSE HORRIBLE  
WOODEN DOLLS  
ON THE TABLE!

UNWARE OF THE INTERLUDE, HAMILTON  
MAKES HIS WAY TO THE MINE... A WAY  
PACKED WITH VICTIMS PETER TOMPSON  
FAILED TO SAVE...

AND SO IT BEGINS  
BUT...

KADA NOSTER...  
KADA ESTER...

WHERE'S DENVER?  
HE SHOULD BE HERE  
HELPING ME!

THE TIME IS HERE!  
THE POWER RISES! SINCE  
AGAIN THE OLD GODS  
COME TO MY AID...

DENVER, HOWEVER, HAS RETURNED  
ALONG THE SECRET PASSAGE FROM  
THE MINE TO THE HOUSE... AND FINDS...

YOU! SO YOU'VE FOUND  
OUT! BUT IT WON'T DO YOU  
ANY GOOD WHEN YOU'RE  
DEAD!

BY THE...!



IT'S NOISE MARKED BY THE DRUMMING  
THE LIFT HAS RISEN... THEN DROPPED  
AGAIN... BRINGING A RESCUEE.



HEY AGAINST THESE ODDS  
WHAT CAN ONE MAN ALONE  
DO... UNLESS HE IS NOT  
QUITE ALONE...

UNLESS HE HAS AN ALLY IN FIRE... FOR WHAT HAPPENS TO THE Voodoo DOLLS ALSO HAPPENS TO THE ZOMBIES THEY REPRESENT...



AND NOW THE DOLLS  
ARE BURNING!

Sylvia! QUICKLY!  
I'LL GET YOU OUT OF  
HERE! THE FIRE SHOULD  
KEEP THEM BUSY...



THEN, AS  
HAMILTON  
REALIZES WHAT  
IS HAPPENING...

YOU'VE  
RESPONSIBLE  
FOR THIS! I'LL  
KILL YOU!

BUT THEN THE LIFT  
DOOR SLIDES OPEN  
ONCE MORE AND...

QUICKLY,  
BOTH OF YOU!  
HERE!



IN AN INSTANT, THE LIFT IS  
RISING ONCE MORE. BUT IN  
THAT INSTANT THEY CATCH  
ONE LAST GLIMPSE OF  
HAMILTON.

NO! GET  
BACK ALL OF YOU!  
GET BACK!

END OF HIS TERRIBLE END.

AAAAUUUGGHH!

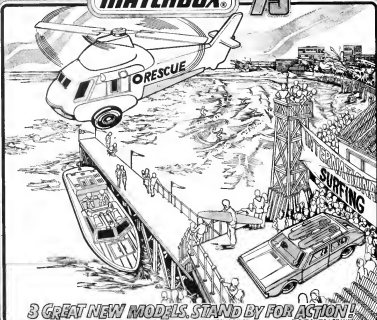
WHILE ABOVE, THREE  
SURVIVORS MOVE  
QUICKLY AWAY FROM  
THE BRIGHT LIGHT  
OF THE FLAMES  
INTO THE COOL  
DARKNESS OF THE  
NIGHT...

IT'S OVER!  
THE UNDERWORLD  
DEAD AT LAST! THE  
PLAGUE IS NO MORE!



THE END



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# FANTASY FILM FESTIVAL



Throughout the world more and more fantasy film festivals are starting every year. These give fans of the country an opportunity to see films from abroad that were never released generally, old classics, and brand new, yet-to-be-released movies.

Thanks to French cineaste, Jean-Marc Lofficier, HoH readers can have the chance to see what happens at such festivals, and can get to know what films could well reach our shores over the coming year, through the following feature special.

For the *Horror Fata* in France, the closing of Spring time means Festival Time. After the far-famed *Avonier Festival*, in February, comes the *Paris* one...

The *Paris International Festival* came into being in 1972, at Nanterre. As ever-increasing number of participants moved it, in turn, to the *Ten-Pop*, the *Manga Palace* and, in 1975 and 1976, into the huge and futuristic *Palais des Congres*. This year, the Festival had moved again to the *Grand Rex*, a *katich* theatre of about three thousand seats, in central Paris.

Starting on March 12th, the Festival lasted over ten days, showing each night two films and a ten-minute shorter feature.

## A Night At The Festival

Outside the *Rex*, more than two hours before the actual start of the projection, a queue of *knobby* horror fans was already forming. Luckily, the weather was nice and the counter clerk efficient, so the waiting was bearable. But speak about success: some nights, not only had the spectators to sit on the stairs or to stand up at the end of the theatre but the organizers had actually to refuse people entry!

The *Rex* itself is a three level theatre, all in gold-and-red-velvet style, with baroque sculptures. The public of the Festival is, to say the least, a lively one. Thanks to the profusion of one-sheet programmes, or plot summaries (for new sub-titled films) made available by the organizers, an armada of paper planes was launched from the second floor to glide gracefully to the screen...

At about 8 o'clock, one of the Festival ladies came on stage and tossed (usually with success despite the cheering crowd) to present the night's programme. And then, the projection started.

Unlike in 1976 where all the shorter features were American (Dan CURTIS' *Trilogy of Terror* and *The Night Stalker* series), this year's new requirements—the *Management* had required that everything was to end before midnight—made it possible only to start with a 10-minute film. Since no French movie was presented this year, the Festival Organizers decided to run a competition of French shorter features. The one that won the "Best" Award was "REVE" (*'Dream*), an animated cartoon on a mythological theme.

At about 8.15, the short feature was coded and the "plac de resistance" started. Out of the 22 films shown this year, it is interesting to note that the Festival Organizers had kept a place for previously unseen movies. Therefore the French public could at last see George Romero's *The Crazies* (Holt review back in issue 5), Joseph Newman's *This Island Earth* and Jake Hecack's *Let's Scare Jessica to Death*. A certain number of *Toko* films had also been programmed but were all (with the exception of *Godzilla vs. The Smog Monster*) replaced, fortunately, by newer and better films.

## A look at the Programme

Among the other 18 films shown, 7 were a *World Premiere*: Peter SAGGY's *Welcome to Blood City* (Canada/UK), F. J. GOTTLEB's *Lady Dracula* (Germany), Derek TODD's *Things to Come* (US), Jose MOCETEZUMA's *Alucarda* (Mexico), Jean POUER's *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (Spain), Jake STANLEY's *Nightmare in Blood* (US) and, last but not least Dario ARGENTO's *Supria* (Italy). All in all a good score for the organizers, even if they could not get films like *Damon Seed* or *The Sentinel*, as originally programmed.

To this international Spectrum of *Horror* or *Fantasy*, we should add Sweden, represented by *Calvin* ("In Search of Dracula") FLODD's Victor Friskaenstein and another Italian movie, DALLAMANO's *Cursed Medallion*.

A word of warning however: two of these should really be avoided: *Lady Dracula* is a rather obvious comedy on the reappearance of a female vampire in former victim of the Count in 18th century Austria. The director included in this film a bad rock music that manages to destroy any effect it could have.

Even worse is *Things To Come*—an acknowledged mistake of the Organizers—a *primo* film using SF as an *alibi*, and a poor one at that

(it bears absolutely no relation at all to WELLS' classic), I hardly could find anything to say on its behalf: the directing is awful, the acting terrible, the special effects awful, the music obnoxious and the story... null!

Apart from these two "blemishes", the rest of the Festival was an enjoyable event. In addition to the retrospective are already mentioned, it was good to see David NIVEN playing *Dracula* in Cine DONNER's *Vampire* and Ernest Borgnine the satirical *Carlos* in FIEST's *The Devil's Rins*.

One of the big success of the Festival was certainly Jeff LIEBERMAN's *Squim* (reviewed in Holt 5). Some scenes, like the one where the worms crawled under the skin of one character, were very effective

## Award Time

The awards given at the Festival went to the following movies: Bert I. GORDON's *Food of the Gods* got the GOLDEN UNICORN. The Special Effects (GORDON's *Matrix System*) depicting the giant rats invasion in this free adaptation of WELLS' classic were undoubtedly the decisive factor in the jury's decision.

The jury's SPECIAL AWARD went to an Australian movie: Jon SHARMAN's *Summer of Secrets*, which also won the CRITICS AWARD. The BEST SCENARIO AWARD went to *Welcome to Blood City*; the BEST MASCULINE INTERPRETATION to Richard BASEHART for his Dr. CRAWLEY role in *Mansion of the Doomed*; and the BEST FEMININE INTERPRETATION went collectively to all the interpreters of Peter WER's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (that famous and lively story of three girls' disappearance on St. Valentine's Day).

The Public itself, through the usual ballot system, gave its own award to Ralph BAKSHY's latest cartoon *Wizards*.

And now, more about some of the previously unseen films that were featured...

## Festival Programme

		Public Poll Rating (maximum: 10)
Sat 12	PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK (P. WER, Australia) Best Feminine Interpretation WICKED-WICKED (R. BARE, USA)	6.47 6.47
Sun 13	WIZARDS (R. BAKSHI, USA) Public Award VAMPIRE (C. DONNER, UK)	8.84 5.50
Mon 14	THE DEVIL'S RAIN (R. FIEST, USA) MANSION OF THE DOOMED (M. PATAKI USA) Richard BASEHART, Best Masculine Interpretation	4.59 5.80
Tue 15	VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN (C. FLODD, Sweden/Ireland) *WELCOME TO BLOOD CITY (P. SAGGY, Canada/UK) Best Scenario	4.20 5.52
Wed 16	*LADY DRACULA (F. J. GOTTLEB, Germany) *GODZILLA vs. THE SMOG MONSTER (T. BANNO, Japan)	4.66 2.30
Thu 17	LET'S SCARE JESSICA TO DEATH (J. HANCOCK, USA) Mentioned by the Jury THE CRUIZERS (B. ROMERO, USA)	5.48 4.70
Fri 18	FOOD OF THE GODS (B. I. GORDON, USA) Golden Unicorn *THINGS TO COME (D. TODD, USA)	6.90 1.30
Sat 19	SQUIM (J. LIEBERMAN, USA) *ALUCARDA (J. MOCETEZUMA, Mexico)	6.86 5.30
Sun 20	*JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH (J. POUER, Spain) SUMMER OF SECRETS (J. SHARMAN, Australia) Jury's Special Award Critics' Award	6.20 6.78
Mon 21	THE CURSED MEDALLION (M. DALLAMANO, Italy) *NIGHTMARE IN BLOOD (J. STANLEY, USA)	4.53 4.10
Tue 22	*SUPRIA (D. ARGENTO, Italy) Mentioned by the Jury THIS ISLAND EARTH (J. NEWMAN, USA)	not rated not rated

\*World Premiere

The unclassified films were presented in retrospective

## FOOD OF THE GODS

(Directed by Bert I. Gordon)

In the relatively small world of Special Effects, after Willis O'Brien, Ray Harryhausen and Jim Danforth, one must not forget Bert I. Gordon who is, unlike the others, a producer, director, and writer... an unprecedented feat since Melies!

Gordon's speciality—if I may say so—are giants (like in *The Spider*, *The Amazing Colossal Man*), or their smaller counterparts (such as in *Attack of the Puppet People*). *Food of the Gods*, of course, uses this factor. Strangely enough, it is not Gordon's first attempt at adapting Wells' classic; in 1965, in *Village of the Giants*, he told the story, in a comedy mood, of the experiments in size-changing by a young scientist.



Some ten years later, in *Food of the Gods*, the treatment of the theme is more tragic: giant animals—wasps and rats—run amok, attacking man. The 'ecological overtones' (nature's revolt) show Gordon's attempt to be 'relevant'. But was Wells irrelevant, or is it only a different approach? In any case, Gordon



Above: Benington (Ralph Meeker) is attacked by the giant rats after trying to escape with the enlarging food. Right: Morgan (Marjoe Gortner) defends himself against a giant cockerel. Below: Mrs Skinner (Ida Lupino) feeds a nasty visitor in her kitchen and.

is certainly an outstanding special effects man. Inventor of the Super-Percepto Vision (used in the *Magic Sword*), he

utilises in *Food of the Gods* a special film, to which later alterations are brought: the *manx* system. Therefore, we can see in the same scene men and giant rats.

This 100 per cent realism—giant rats being far more impressive than Giant Spiders or Giant worms—makes *Food of the Gods* a special effects success, the story being a little bit obvious and without much surprise. Enough, it seems, to win it the famous **Golden Unicorn** Award at the festival.



### FOOD OF THE GODS (U.S.A.)

Ida Lupino (as Mrs Skinner), Ralph Meeker (Benington), Marjoe Gortner (Morgan), John Cyer (Brian), Chuck Courtney (Diana)

Directed by Bert I. Gordon; Produced by Samuel Z. Arkoff, Screenplay by Bert I. Gordon (after the novel by H. G. Wells), 90 mins, 1975.

## JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH

(Directed by Juan Piquer)

Classics never die, it seems. The centre of the Earth has already been visited by cinemas. From *The Mole People* to the recent *At the Earth's Core*, it has always been a tradition to populate it with various monsters. Juan Piquer's film does not betray this tradition. Indeed, his special effects team was advised by Harryhausen himself and, as a result, the monster sequences are truly beautiful.

Juan Piquer was clever enough to avoid Calvin Floyd's mistake; whilst he does not betray Jules Verne's spirit, he does not feel obliged to stick closely to the novel and adds to it, like SF novelist P. J. Farmer adds to the Burroughs mythos. The story itself is known. Prof. Lindenbrock finds an old traveller's log that leads him, his daughter and her fiancé, to the centre of the Earth from a dead volcano in Iceland, and back via the Stromboli in Italy.

If Piquer had closely followed Verne's novel, we would have had a very dull movie. As it is, our explorers meet a



*A menacing inhabitant from the centre of the Earth*

a mysterious man at the centre of the Earth, Olsen (masterly played by Jack Taylor), who does strange experiments with a portable generator of advanced design. They eventually discover that Olsen is a man from the future—and glimpse, for a few seconds, a future city where men exactly like Olsen are engaged in mysterious activities. We also learn that Olsen was at the origin of Prof. Lindenbrock's finding of the log, and perhaps other, future discoveries as well!

Thanks to Olsen, though we all know the plotline, we never lose interest in the film story. The special effects are

good and the "King Kong" met at the centre of the Earth has no need to envy its bigger counterpart, despite a considerably smaller budget! The photography making is also quite good, it always "feel" like the centre of the Earth.

The characters—well acted—are in Verne's style; too conventional (absent-minded scientist, etc.) in their XIXth century fashion. But the humour is never disrespectful, and the presence of the cold and scientific Olsen makes them in the end, closer to us.

Since 1959 (Henry Levin's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* classic), this is probably the best film on the subject. One looks forward to seeing other films by el señor Piquer...

### JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH (Spain)

Kenneth More (as Professor Otto Lindenbrock), Pep Munné (Axel); Ivonne Serris (Glauber); Frank Berra (Hans); Jack Taylor (Olsen); Lora Fleming (Molly); Jose Cifuent (Professor Frickson); Imiliano Recondo (Cristof).

Directed and produced by Juan Piquer; Screenplay by Carlos Puerto, John Melson and Juan Piquer (after the novel by Jules Verne); 90 mins; 1977.

## THE CURSED MEDALLION

(Directed by Massimo Dallamano)

(U.S. title *The Night Child*)

Yet another film "inspired" by *The Exorcist*.

Michael Williams is a BBC film director planning to make a feature programme about the Devil. He goes to Spoleto, a small Italian village, where he meets a Countess Capella who owns a strange painting. Within the painting one can see, in the Devil's grasp, a burning woman jumping to her death under the eyes of a child wearing a medallion, said to be cursed. Precisely what happened to Williams' wife some months ago. Now, his very possessive 12-year-old daughter, Emily (we shall learn eventually that she was the one who killed her mother), tries to kill any woman that her father meets. It starts with her young nurse, and then her father's girl friend...

At the end of the film, near the Devil Painting, Emily will kill both her father and herself.

Shades of Freud! The story itself is not very coherent—one does not see clearly the Devil's part, or those of the medallion... Furthermore, there are a



*Murderous 12-year-old Emily (Nicole Elmi) wakes screaming from a chilling nightmare (left) and proceeds to stalk the eerie Castle Spoleto (right).*



lot of moments in the film where nothing happens (and, in that of films, this cannot be tolerated). Therefore, any interest we can have for the story quickly decreases...

The acting lacks some conviction—with the exception of Nicola Elmi who plays Emily. However, the beautiful streets of Spoleto are more of a compensation for an unremarkable film.

I am afraid, Dallamano is no Mario Bava...

### THE CURSED MEDALLION (Italy)

With Richard Johnson; Nicole Elmi; Joanna Cassidy; Evelyn Stewart. Directed by Massimo Dallamano; Screenplay by Dallamano, Franco Marotta and Laura Toscani; Produced by William C. Reisch; 92 mins; 1975.

## ALUCARDA

(Directed by Juan Moctezuma)

Juan Moctezuma was one of the five directors (along with Calvin Floyd, John Stanley, Juan Piquer and Dario Argento) present at the Festival. There was a rather awkward moment when, after having been "greeted" by a shouting crowd (I have already said that the public was a lively one, sometimes verging on the . . . infantile!), he left the stage without further ado.

Unlike his *Mansion de la Locura* (that received the Jury's Special Award in 1974), *Alucarda* is a story about Satan and witches. Everybody will have realized that *Alucarda* is Dracula spelled backwards, with an extra 'a' to add a feminine note (there was a Count Alucard in a Mexican Vampire Film). But why, since the film never mentions Dracula or even Vampires?

However, the movie starts with the birth of *Alucarda*, daughter of Satan. The child is taken to a convent, where she will grow up. Years later, she meets Justine, de Sade's heroine, and a strange friendship grows between the two girls. During a stroll in the woods and a visit to *Alucarda*'s haunted birth place the two girls meet a gypsy sorcerer. Back at the convent, they engage into a witch ritual, become blood sisters and go to a sabbat, selling their souls to the Devil.

Discovered by the Sisters, *Alucarda*



*Doctor Orsbeck (Claudio Brook) ignores the plea of the bearded Father Lazaro (David Silva) while Alucarda (Tina Romero) lies unconscious in his arms, after the exorcism that kills Justina (Susana Karsina).*

and Justine are submitted to an exorcism, in which Justine is killed, *Alucarda* is saved by the local Doctor—an unbeliever, of course—who takes her home. But she escapes, while Justine's body, now possessed, flees after having killed a nun. The Doctor, now con-

vinced of Satan's existence, and some sisters go after her and manage to destroy her with holy water. Meanwhile, *Alucarda* has been playing havoc in the convent, burning people simply by her look. A final exorcism reduces her body to ashes.

Moctezuma described *Alucarda* as a 'preparation for other films about witchcraft' he intends to shoot, and he added that, for him, '*Alucarda* was the archetype of the witch'. The problem with this approach is that *Alucarda* is torn between the supernatural and rationalization. Moctezuma does not seem able to decide whether Satan does exist, or if witches are only sensuous girls refusing the Church's strict rules. Therefore, the film fails on both accounts: it is not a good supernatural-based horror movie like *The Exorcist* nor is it a good realistic one (like Ken Russell's *The Devils*).

Let us hope that the next Moctezuma film will somehow be more satisfying.



*Above: The barbaric rites at the sabbat where Alucarda and Justine sell their souls to Satan.*

**ALUCARDA** (Mexico)  
Claudio Brook (as Dr. Orsbeck, overlord), Tina Romero (Alucarda), Susana Karsina (Justine), David Silva (Father Lazaro)  
Directed by Juan L. Moctezuma; Produced by Eduardo Moreno and Max Guelfi; Screenplay by Juan & Yolanda Moctezuma and Alexis T. Arroyo; 90 mins. 1977.

## MANSSION OF THE DOOMED

(Directed by Michael Pataki)

**M**ansion of the Doomed is not a monster film. Unless one wants to consider that Man may well be the worst monster of all...

Dr. Leonard Chaney (Richard Basehart) is a famous physician specializing in eye transplant research. His daughter, Nancy (Trish Stewart), has been blind since a car crash in which her father was involved. Burdened by guilt, Chaney wants to give sight back to his daughter. At any price...

One night, he drugs Nancy's boy friend, Dan (Lance Henriksen), and helped by his Assistant (Gloria Grahame), transplants his eyes onto his daughter without her knowing the donor's identity. After the operation,

transplant her eyes on Nancy. Whilst he is burying the body after the operation Nancy wakes up and, inadvertently, discovers her father's victims—including her lost boy friend! When Chaney comes back, Nancy plays along and manages to lure her father into the cave, where she has already released his victims.

Mansion of the Doomed was certainly not intended to be funny. However, it does appeal to the black humour sense in each of us. The way mad Chaney prowls the city, looking for eyes, could have been terrifying. However, it is not. Pataki treats it almost lightly. Richard Basehart, who also stars in Allen's Flood, deserved his award because of the... natural way he was acting in a revolting role! No outé, no melodrama in the famous Mad Scientist style. Only a sweet—even understand-



Chaney locks the now-blind Dan up in his cave, in the hope to cure him later should his method succeed. Unfortunately, Nancy's body rejects the eyes! Chaney's becoming quite unbalanced, starts kidnapping people to launch a new series of transplants, which all prove to be failures since Nancy's body rejects them almost immediately. Meanwhile, Chaney's blind victims in the cave—there are now about 8—manage to dig a hole in the wall. Two prisoners escape, but one is caught by Chaney while the other, a girl, is killed by a car.

A Police visit, after the accident, determines Chaney to have a final try. The opportunity comes after the murder of his assistant by the prisoners: he will

able—obsession that turns into raving madness.

The plight of the blind victims, locked in Chaney's cave, is quite gripping. And the desperate escape of the blind girls was one of the highlights of an otherwise average film.

I would not go far enough to say that Basehart's interpretation saves the show—the film has other qualities—but it certainly helps!

**MANSSION OF THE DOOMED (U.S.A.)**  
With Richard Basehart, Gloria Grahame;  
Trish Stewart and Lance Henriksen.  
Directed by Michael Pataki; Produced by  
Charles Band; Screenplay by Frank Ray  
Perilli, 90 mins; 1976

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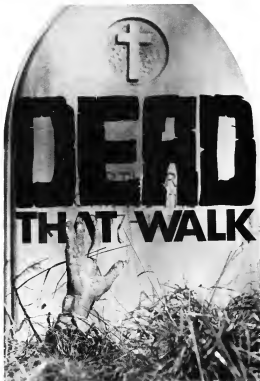
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## CLASSIFIED



The 'Zombie' they say, is a soulless human corpse, still dead, but taken from the grave and endowed by sorcery with a mechanical semblance of life... it is a dead body which is made to walk and act and move as if it were alive." This is William B. Seabrook's description of the walking dead, taken from his book, 'The Magic Island'. Seabrook's book told of his travels to Haiti, with one chapter covering these human corpses.

Among the many themes in the fantasy-film-makers' arsenal, the story of the Dead, or zombie-like, are the most exploited. The reason for this is quite simple, the Dead have always been feared by man; they represent the form of things unknown.

The proliferation of Mummies, Vampires, Ghosts and Zombies on the screen goes to

Following our adaptation of Hammer's *Plague of the Zombies*, Tise Vahimagi now makes a selective observation of the whole zombie theme and some of its interesting offshoots.

prove that moviemakers are more than willing to capitalise on this fear. However, over the years the Mummy, the Vampire, and the Ghost have set up their own limitations, their own ground rules by which they operate.

The zombie theme has evolved into something that really has no set laws to govern it, and the character has appeared in countless films which have had no bearing on its origins.

The term, zombie, had at one time a direct meaning; the Haitian-based voodoo victim. The term has been broadened to the extent that anything resembling a human which moves fairly sluggishly and appears listless, if not dead, is referred to as a zombie.

The Halperin brothers' *White Zombie*, released in 1932, made the term popular with cinema audiences, and pretty much laid down the basis for many similar films to follow:

Madeline (*Madge Bellamy*) comes to Haiti to marry Neil (*John Harlow*), her fiance. During the voyage from New York she has met Charles Beaumont (*Robert Frazier*), a rich plantation owner. Beaumont has insisted that her forthcoming marriage be held at his estate.

The young couple witness a sinister





*Ray Acheson's makeup mastery provided us with the Hammer version of zombies, in their 1965 Plague of the Zombies.*

ceremony that night, and meet the even more sinister Murder Legendre (Bela Lugosi). Beaumont has actually fallen in love with Madeline, and calls upon Legendre, zombie-master of the island, for his evil assistance. By way of some voodoo practice, involving a waxen image of Madeline, Legendre manages to put her into a state of apparent death.

## HALPERIN ZOMBIES

After her body has been placed in the Beaumont mausoleum it is stolen by Beaumont and Legendre, with the aid of the latter's six zombie bodyguards. The now mindless Madeline is held at Legendre's cliff-top castle, and just wanders aimlessly through the musty corridors. Meanwhile, Neil has discovered the disappearance of Madeline's body from the tomb, and enlists the help of one Dr. Bruner (Joseph Cawthorn), who is something of an authority on voodooism. They locate the zombie-master's remote castle and in the ensuing conflict the slowly-poisoned Beaumont destroys Legendre, along with himself, by hurtling over the cliff onto the rugged shoreline. Madeline and Neil are now reunited with the breaking of Legendre's spell.

*White Zombie*, although a roughly-made film, still stands up today as a very interesting picture; it is something of an irony that the film, when originally released in America, was virtually ignored by the critics but went on to recoup its initial expenditure, thus being a success as far as the Halperin's were concerned. They, in fact, went on to produce *Revel of the Zombies* in 1936, but resulted with an inferior duplication.

This film begins during the last months of



*A scene from the 1961 Mardi Gras production of The Dead One.*

the First World War where we are shown a company of zombie soldiers routing the enemy, unperturbed by the incoming bullets. The confusing story then goes on to tell of a secret formula for putting people under a trance-like spell—creating zombies—and the pursuit of this secret by various characters.

*Revel of the Zombies* was directed by Victor Halperin, who also directed *White Zombie*, but failed to come anywhere near the style and class of the earlier production.

In 1940, Paramount Pictures came out with *The Ghost Breakers*, a lighthearted comic attempt at the zombie/Haiti theme featuring Bob Hope and Paulette Goddard. Directed by George Marshall, the film is loosely about a radio commentator (Hope) who, by accident, ends up in the Caribbean with Harry Carter (Goddard), who has just inherited an old, crumbling castle. Originating from an earlier stage-play, and now accommodating Bob Hope's antics, the "haunted" castle sequences



Not really zombies, but decidedly living dead. *The Thing That Couldn't Die* (Universal, 1958) featured a villainous 400-year-old head that hypnotized people. In the above scene, it "acquires" a body!



United Artists' 1959 production of *Invisible Invaders*. A pretty poor film, featuring moon invaders talking over dead bodies.

turn into a speedy force. However, there are some quite cute moments, played out in the atmospheric castle settings, which have the principals being chased by the forbidding Noble Johnson as a *Zombie*.

During the early Forties, Monogram Pictures churned out extremely low-grade zombie material such as *King of the Zombies*, *Revenge of the Zombies* and *Voodoo Man*. The first of this group, *King of the Zombies* (1941), was a simple, lifeless (no pun intended)

story concerning three men, Bill Summers (John Archer), 'Mac' McCarthy (Dick Powell) & Jefferson Jackson (Monty Marland), who are forced to land their small aircraft on a remote Caribbean island. There they encounter one Dr. Miles Sanger (Henry Victor), who claims he and his family are from Austria, refugees of the war. It seems that the island is swarming with zombies, controlled, apparently, by old Tahoma (Madame Salsessa), the cook. Needless to say, Sanger denies

the total existence of zombies. Sanger has a beautiful wife, Alyce (Patricia Steacy), who appears to be in a hypnosis-like trance. There is also the young niece, Barbara (Joan Woodbury), to supply the inevitable love interest. Dr. Sanger is really an Axis agent who has an American Admiral held captive on the island, which is pretty obvious to all except the ladies in the film. The idea is that Sanger plans to transfer information from the Admiral's mind to that of his wife, via voodoo. Along the way, Jackson believes himself to be a *zombie* (after being subjected to hypnosis) and attempts to supply some comic relief involving the other zombies. Eventually, 'Mac' becomes a zombie and ends up leading the regular zombie pack against Sanger, finally causing the villain's death. Jackson and 'Mac' revert back to their former selves, and the Admiral is saved.

The production standards of this film barely rise up to the obscurity of the story. Jean Yarbrough was responsible for the direction, which seemed to alternate between attempts at old-dark-house froths and lapsed horror. *King of the Zombies* was, if it is possible to imagine, the best of this little Monogram group.

1943 saw *Revenge of the Zombies*, featuring (or rather, writing) John Carradine. This one centres around Nazi Doctor Von Altman (Carradine) who is secretly trying to create an army of zombies. Into the shambles of this story, and over-laminate studio settings, comes three more heroes (including, again, Monty Marland as a character called Jeff) to disrupt the Axis enterprise. Marland, incidentally, goes through the same unfunny 'comic relief' paces as seen in the previous picture.

The third, and last, of these Monogram potboilers was William Brundage's *Voodoo Man*, released in 1941. Robert Charles' screenplay seemed to take itself more seriously:

Near the town of Twin Falls there has been a spate of strange disappearances—all young women. Another young girl mysteriously vanishes, near the house of physician Richard Marlowe (Boris Lugosi), and Ralph Dawson (Michael Ansara), a scriptwriter, along with the girl's sister, Betty (Wanda McCay) set off in search.

## WARTIME ZOMBIE FILMS AS NAZI PROPAGANDA

Betty, prowling around Marlowe's house also disappears. Ralph teams up with the police and they come across Marlowe and his assistant, Nicholas (George Zucco), about to perform a voodoo ceremony with Betty and Marlowe's zombie-like wife (similar to the sequence in *King of the Zombies*).

As if nobody knew by now, Marlowe has been abducting the girls in an attempt to find a girl with the right mind (mental plane) for reviving his wife. All the other girls had been total failures, and are now zombies looked after by Joh (John Carradine). The climax sees the police shoot Marlowe who, before he dies, destroys his wife and effects the release



Hammer's 1966 *Plague of the Zombies*, directed by John Gilling.



Tar Jackson becomes The Beast of Yucca Flats, after being caught in the middle of a radioactive bomb testing (1950).

of the girl-zombies.

Despite the inclusion of Lugosi, Zerkow, and Carradine, *Voodoo Man* was as mediocre as the previous Monogram pot, and was happily the last of the Monogram/zombie entries. As with most wartime films, *King of the Zombies* and *Revenge of the Zombies* were merely genre vehicles for domestic propaganda, utilizing the zombie-theme as a basis for Nazi activities. Only the last movie, *Voodoo Man*, took itself on its own level and produced an actual explanation for the creation of zombies, not to follow with the contemporary trend of 'suspense agents'.

Slotted between such dismal fare as *Revenge of the Zombies* and, the yet-to-come, *Valley of the Zombies*, RKO Radio Pictures came forth with one of the rare, classic, examples in the zombie-film: *I Walked With a Zombie*.

RKO appointed studio story-editor Val Lewton to the position of producer on a series of low-budget horror films, beginning with the relatively successful *Cat People*. Working from the script by Carl Siodmak and Arvid Wray, Lewton assigned Jacques Tourneur to direct *I Walked With a Zombie*, and brought about a whole new style to the making of horror films. Lewton's concept was that suggestion would spark the imagination of the audience into a greater terror than he could convey on the screen. It was later to continue as an effective method on such productions as *The Leopard Man* (1943), *The Seventh Victim* (1953), *Curse of the Cat People* (1944), and *The Body Snatcher* (1945).

However, the style came about more directly from budgetary restrictions at RKO than from Lewton's genius—but more basically, Lewton's talents were such that he was able to overcome these limitations and produce exciting cinema.

The main reason why *I Walked With a Zombie* worked was that the emphasis was on visual atmosphere, rather than on plodding dialogue, to create the excitement.

Nurse Betsy Connell (*Frances Dee*) is offered the employment of caring for the



The maimed and with doctor star of *Death Comes at Dinner* (1947) comes back to life to revenge himself on rabbits who had desecrated his grave.

invalid wife of a sugar plantation owner, Paul Holland (*Tom Conway*), on the isle of San Sebastian, in the Caribbean. An atmosphere begins to formulate, when during the voyage there (after Holland has come out to meet her) he starts making remarks about death and decay surrounding his home.

When Betsy arrives at the island her initial introduction is by way of menacing natives and lurid reminders of the island's earlier slave-trade. An atmosphere of gloom hovers over the landscape. Betsy meets Paul's half-brother, Wesley Road (*James Ellison*), who tells her that the household consists of their mother (*Edith Barrett*) and the invalid wife, Jessica (*Arlene Gordon*). Things are made even colder for the young nurse when she realizes that a sense of hostility exists between the brothers.

That evening, Betsy finds herself wandering through the dark, ominous home to investigate a noise; this gives Lewton another chance to unnervingly view even further through the use of light and shadow—and things yet unseen. The night's proceedings result in Betsy realizing that Jessica is mentally ill.

The nurse next meets a local physician, Doctor Maxwell (*James Bell*), who drags the heavy atmosphere down even deeper by referring to Jessica as a *zombie*: "She makes a beautiful zombie, doesn't she?"

At the nearby village, Betsy is present when Wesley gets drunk and in trying to assist him to his feet she meets Mrs. Road, a strange woman who escorts her back to the Holland home.

During dances, Betty hears of the Home-front, the name for the island's voodoo temple. The following day, she and Doctor Maxwell discuss the possibilities of reviving Jessica through shock treatment, but Holland has little faith in this method. After talking with a servant, Betty is informed that a cure may be sought at the Home-front but Mrs. Rand tells her that this could be dangerous.

However, Betty decides that voodoo may be the only cure for Jessica. So, leading her by the hand, she takes Jessica through the cane fields to the Home-front. This is where Lewton starts turning up the power on the audience, in terms of suspense. Just about every aspect appears to have a depressive grey tone, wind blows the sugar-cane in all directions. They eventually come across a dead goat, hanging from a tree, which signifies that a voodoo ritual is taking place somewhere nearby. They carry on, amidst the moaning and wailing cane, until they suddenly spot a tall, dark figure standing in the path. We see the figure a bit more clearly when Betty's flashlight shines over him—it is Carré Four. He is the guardian of the Home-front, a weird, semi-holistic figure with large staring eyes. However, the girls are wearing some special protective markings which allow them to pass unhindered.

Nothing ghostly or horrific really occurs during this sequence, but due to the claustrophobic manner of the camera, taking us along the small path (practically from a subjective point of view) we somehow expect something to jump out on us—but nothing actually happens, except in our imaginations.

At the Home-front, Betty meets the voodoo priestess—who turns out to be Mrs. Rand. She explains to Betty that in order to get the natives to accept medicine, she pretends to



A zombie rises from its grave in the dream sequence of Hammer's *Flower of the Zombies* (1966).

possess special powers. The natives regard the unburying Jessica as a sacrifice, and start taking an interest in her.

Back at the Holland home, there is a dispute during which Betty learns that Jessica really is a zombie—a voodoo spell had been cast on her by Mrs. Rand, who had become insanely jealous when Wesley and Jessica had planned to go away together at one time. This is disputed by Doctor Maxwell, who states that in order for someone to become a zombie they must first be dead—and Jessica is certainly not dead.

The voodoo ceremony continues at Home-front, with the natives performing a ritual to draw Jessica back to them; Jessica stirs, back at the house, and starts making her way

off the estate. Wesley follows her hat, using Carré Four approaching, he picks her up and heads for the sea, finally walking into the powerful waves.

Early in the morning, a torchlight procession of natives arrive at the Holland home, carrying with them the drowned bodies of Wesley and Jessica. The tragedy and gloom of the island claims a further two victims.

*I Walked With a Zombie*, a very canbure movie, was mainly panned, if not totally ignored, by contemporary critics. It is strange, however, that this film, along with Lewton's other productions, has now gained some cult popularity—some three decades after its release. Lewton, at the time, described it as 'Jane Eyre in the West Indies', which is a much more appropriate way to take it than the exploitation label that RKO stuck it with. Most of Val Lewton's films rise far above their shrewd titles, and *I Walked With a Zombie* is no exception.

Combining the elements of comedy with horror (which, in certain movies, can become quite confusing), RKO released *Zombies on Broadway* in 1943. Frontlining two comedians, Wally Brown and Alan Carney, this sub-standard entry revolved around a nightclub called 'The Zombie Hut', for which the two comics promised to supply a real zombie on the opening night. Throtened by the club's gangster owner, Ace Miller (Sheldon Leonard), he begs to locate on Richard Remant (Bela Lugosi), who has made a study of voodoo. They trace him to the island of San Sebastian (RKO studios, again), where he has been turning people into zombies with his special serum. From this point the film turns into a complete farce, even to the end when Remant orders his zombie-bodyguard to kill the comic heroes but the brute turns on him instead.

Utilising nearly the same crew that worked on *I Walked With a Zombie*, *Zombies on Broadway* had the direction of Gordon Douglas and a fairly competent cast, but somehow never allowed itself to take off.



Dr. Blood's Coffin (United Artists, 1961). A heart transplant from a living body into a dead one is attempted to bring back the world's top talent.

Overall, it appears to be torn between its two basic elements, which result in its failure.

Republic Pictures came into the theme in 1946 with their *Valley of the Zombies*, which combined science with voodoo. Briefly, the story concerns a scientist, Ormand Marks (Jan Kott), who is recruited to a mental institute. It is Marks' belief that there exists a plane between life and death which can be achieved via special blood transfusions. The real reference to the film's title belongs only as a location where Marks picked up his voodoo secret for creating the living dead. This film is actually a borderline case on the theme, but it does have something of a voodoo-based element in the story.

With the advent of the 1950s, science-fiction became the ruling factor in horror films, with the zombie element now worked into a scientific setting. Still, there were a few films that retained something of the old style. 1953's *Sealed Air* was the Paramount remake of their earlier *The Ghost Breakers*, this time featuring the then-popular team of Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin. Needless to say, this version lacked all the mood and flavor that made the 1939 picture succeed on its own level.

1957 saw just about the last two 'serious' zombie films of that decade, *Voodoo Island* and *Zombies of Mora-Tau*.

## ZOMBIES OF MORA-TAU

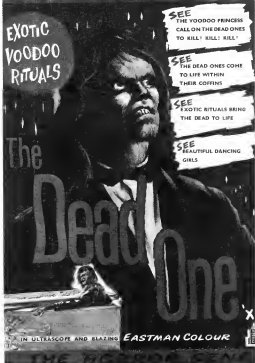
*Voodoo Island* cast an aging Boris Karloff, as professor Philip Knight, in a remote island setting where there are caravaneer plants and hostile natives ready to turn intruders into zombie-like beings. This picture was nothing exceptional, save the presence of Karloff, although he was wasted.

Columbia released *Zombies of Mora-Tau* the same year, but this also failed to come up to expectations.

After a period of ten years, Jan Peters (Astron Karvell) visits her grandmother's home, Mora-Tau, on the African coast. Her first unsettling experience comes when her grandfather's driver, during the journey to the house, luts down a strange, rugged man on the road and quickly carries on. Later, both the driver and her grandmother (Marjorie Eaton) die in the incident quickly.

An expedition arrives off the Mora-Tau coastline hunting for diamonds on the sea-bed. George Harrison (Jed Ashley) leads the expedition, with his wife, Mona (Arlene Rayn), Jeff Clark (Gerry Patner), a diver, and archaeologist Jonathan Eggert (Marvin Ashman).

When they meet Jan's grandmother she warns them of great dangers should they try to locate the diamonds. She also points out the graves of previous expeditions, and the archaeologist recalls the legend of the 'Satan Reef' wreck from some 66 years before. The story goes that in 1894, when the ship came, they discovered the wealth of uncut diamonds belonging to the natives. The Captain (actually the grandmother's late husband) and half the crew were killed in conflict over the gems.



Later, the Captain and the other 'un-dead' men returned to the ship, killing the remaining few onboard and sinking the vessel—they have been the walking dead ever since.

Pretty soon, the new expedition encounter the zombies and suffer some casualties among the crewmen; Jeff is nearly killed by the zombies, who are able to travel along in the depths of the sea. Problems occur among the group, as Jeff and George bargin over the treasure. George's wife argues with him and runs off. She fails to turn up again, and the search leads the group to an old mausoleum where they discover that she is now a zombie (unrecognisably!).

The climax sees the zombies, after some harrowing sequences, disappear forever when the grandmother throws the gems overboard into the depths.

This film, more or less, laid down some basic ground rules for similar productions to come: groups of menacing 'wolves', white-men with that traditional haggard, dark-circle-around-the-eyes look.

The mindless character, later to become known as the zombie, first arrived on the screens in Robert Wiens's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), in the form of somnambulist killer Cesare Vidui. In excluding the 'revived dead' (*Frankenstein*, *Man-Made Monster*, etc) because of the direct scientific influence, it is interesting to take a look at the films that used the basic zombie-theme by featuring humans that had been 'taken over' (lost identity) by something, turning them into a form somewhat akin to the established zombie figure.

These characters fall into two basic groups: the massed gang (as in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*), and the individuals (such as seen in *The Earth Dies Screaming*).

In *Come From Outer Space* (1953) had an alien take-over of a small desert community, with the particular characters taking on a sluggish behaviour and glazed eyes (sometimes luminous) making them visually zombie-like. The same fate befell some of the principal characters in *Invasion From Mars* (1953). Here

they walked around with an emotionless expression, speaking almost dialogue. There were others in this category, such as *Creature With the Atom Brain* (1955), *Plan Nine From Outer Space* (1956), *Brain From Planet Ares* (1956), in which flying alien brains enter the minds of humans, *Moostrosity* (1963), which involved failed brain experiments, *The Earth Dies Screaming* (1964), etc.

The groups of menacing zombie-like characters could be seen in, especially, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1955) where the paranoid reality sets in.

Dr. Miles Bemaell (Kevin McCarthy), returning to his small practice in a California town, finds that many people, although physically unchanged, appear to have changed. Shortly afterwards, Bemaell, along with his fiancée, Becky (Dana Feyer), are called over to a friend's house to see a job-like thing changing into a duplicate of the friend, Jack (King Donovan).

It is not long before the entire community has been duplicated by these strange pods, actually extra-terrestrial seeds intent on 'taking over'. Only Bemaell, Becky, Jack, and his wife, Theodora (Carolyn Jones), remain.

The couple go for help, but return trans-

formed that they are vulnerable to high-frequency sound, and they march on the principals looking just like the crowd from *Zombies of Mora-Tau*, which is hardly surprising as the director was Edward Galt, source of both movies.

*Night of the Living Dead* (1968) must be the prime example, despite the inclusion of cannibals. All the elements are there: corpses revived from the grave, sluggish performance with a drained expression, and the stilted walk. However, the indictment for their revival was alien, not voodoo, but this picture makes a perfect headliner case.

Now, back to the more related zombie productions, most of which are cheap, shoddy and casual. Directed by journeyman Edward Galt, *The Four Skulls of Jonathan Drake* (1959), tells the tale of Kenneth and Jonathan Drake, survivors of a family cursed by an Ecuadorian medicine man 180 years ago. Kenneth is killed, and an unsuccessful attempt is made on Jonathan's life by an Ecuadorian zombie. Police investigations lead to one Dr. Zurich, a man who dabbles in head-shrinking. It turns out that Zurich died some 180 years ago, but before anything can be done Zurich kidnaps Jonathan's daughter in the hope of

*I Eat Your Skin* (1964, though released in 1971) produce scientifically-created zombies. The following year 1972, zombies and their Haitian origin even turned up (in somewhat gaudily stylized way) to make 'different' antagonists for super-spy James Bond in *Live and Let Die*.

But back in 1955, Hammer Films brought some conviction back into the zombie theme with *Plague of the Zombies*, even though their Carraway location seemed pretty far removed from Haiti. Not considered much at the time, John Gilling's film now, in retrospect, stands up pretty well against what Hammer was producing at the time. The traditional Hammer ingredients are all there; the evil aristocracy, the splendid estate, the drawing out of terror, etc. Another hint of Hammer's is apparent here: the transposition of setting (their classic example must be in situating the Werewolf-these in medieval Spain, in *Cave of the Werewolf*).

One of the most remarkable, and frightening, scenes occurs during Brook Williams' nightmare, in which he finds himself in a desolate cemetery just as the zombies start breaking and rising from their graves. A certain malevolent atmosphere is retained throughout the film, very much in the usual Hammer style.

## VOODOO GIRL

A good film, worthy of inclusion in this selection, is Paul Madansky's *Voodoo Girl*, alternatively known as *Sugar Hill* (although some U.S. marquee billed it as 'Sugar Hill and Her Army of Zombie Hit Men'). This 1974 film told about the revenge of a murdered nightclub owner's girlfriend, Diana 'Sugar' Hill (Nancy Roy), who enlists the aid of Baron Samedi (Don Pedro Collyer), Lord of the underworld, and his fellow black zombies against the white racketeer and his mob. Individually, the racketeer's gang are dominated by the zombies. Finally, he is lured out to a remote swampy plantation and dies during a chase through quicksands. Baron Samedi ends up carrying the gangster's girlfriend to the underworld with him.

*Voodoo Girl* is pretty much in the black-film-making exploitation style, but as a horror/zombie entry it comes across quite effectively. The central (voodoo) characters are black, while the 'original' element (the eventual victims) are mainly caucasian. However, there are quite a few pleasing sequences, such as the bulging-eyed zombies, smeared with mud and dead leaves, rising from the earth, and the disposal of one gang member by female zombies in a massage parlour.

Unfortunately the Zombie film has never risen (?) to the heights of the Vampire, or the 'non-made Monster' movie. But despite its cinema history of low-budget quickies it has offered, nevertheless, an interesting selection of titles to add to the Horror Film category, though sad to say, it seems unlikely that we'll ever get another entry that will take itself as seriously as, say, *I Walked With a Zombie* or Hammer's *Plague of the Zombies*. ■



*The Dead That Walk* (USA: *Zombies of Mora-Tau*). This 1957 film features treasure hunters encountering zombies in Africa.

formed. Bemaell and Becky escape (in a scene where the whole town pursues them) and hide out in a disused mine. In the morning Bemaell realises that Becky, too, has been taken over by the aliens. He dashes for the highway, hoping to alert the rest of the world of the invasion.

Although the transformed townsfolk aren't visually horrible, the real terror lies in the fact that they want to make you out of them—a sadistic thrill.

*Quatermass II* (1957) had a similar plot, the transformation and eventual invasion of Earth by aliens who take over the minds of humans, reducing them to zombie-like figures.

In 1959, United Artists released *Invisible Invaders*, which must have saved a goodly amount on the budget as the 'invaders' were initially invisible, and their space-ship was invisible. This is simply a story of invading aliens 'harrowing' the bodies of humans and creating chaos around the globe. It is not until the final moments that we get to see these invaders, when it is discovered

eventually killing, and decapitating, Jonathan, Jonathan does show up, and promptly decapitates Zurich who immediately turns to dust.

Although Henry Daniell is good (as always), in the role of Dr. Zurich, the film is generally a mish-mosh of South American superstition. Why the lips of Zurich's zombie are sewn up is never explained.

The quality (or rather, the lack of it) of *The Four Skulls of Jonathan Drake* is basically maintenance of the film that followed, with only a couple of exceptions.

1960's *The Dead One* centres around the title character who plunges the tenants of an estate called Knobsforth; *Invasion of the Zombies* (1961) features the masked Mexican wrestler, Santo, who tangles with a crazed scientist and his army of zombies; *War of the Zombies* (1963) is one of the sweet-and-sarcastic sagas involving dead Roman soldiers in the title role; *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors* (1964) has a silly segment which shows Roy Castle comically menaced by the power of voodoo;

# VAN HELSING'S TERROR TALES



## the CURSE of CORMAC



IN THE GLEN OF A LAND THEIR EYES BEHOLD AN AWESOME SIGHT!

"STOMP THE CROWNS! LOOK AT THAT!"

"GOOD GRIEF HE MUST BE OVER SEVEN FEET TALL A GIANT!"

BUT JUST AS THE PICK SCARF THROUGH INTO THE MOUNT BENEATH...

RAAARK!

JEEZ- US!

WHAT...

GAS!

NOW THAT'S WHAT I CAME HERE FOR!

HOLD ON! I WOULDN'T TOUCH THAT SWORD IF I WERE YOU!

LOOK, DAVE I'VE READ UP ABOUT THESE THINGS. THERE'S AN OLD LEGEND ABOUT A GIANT CHIEFTAIN, CORMAC. HE HAD A SWORD LIKE THAT A MAGIC SWORD.

AH COME ON

STUFF THE LAW, MATE. WHAT WE FIND WE KEEP. THAT'S THE ONLY LAW I KNOW.

WHERE ON EARTH DID THAT THING COME FROM? IT'S LIKE IT CAME OUT OF THE GROUND!

CHABLESS! GET OUT OF THE WAY. WE'RE NOT GONNA CRACK THIS ONE IF WE STAND AROUND GABBERING ALL DAY!

SOON THEY HAD BURSTEN THROUGH INTO THE MOUNT BENEATH THE MOUND.

THAT'S IT WE'RE THROUGH. COMIN' IN?

OR... I'LL STAY UP TOP, IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU.

THERE'S MORE... THE LEGEND SAYS HE WAS A SORCERER A BLACK MAGICIAN! HIS THOUGHTS WOULD TAKE FLIGHT AS A GRAY CROW - IT ALL THIS IN!

AND YOU BELIEVE THAT CLATTER? WELL, MATE, THAT'S THE AGREEMENT. FINDERS, KEEPERS!

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MILLENNIA, CORMAC'S SWORD SAW THE LIGHT OF DAY.

LOOK AT THIS! IT'LL FETCH TWENTY GRAND AT LEAST!

TWENTY GRAND SPLIT THREE WAYS, THAT'S NOT BAD!





NEXT MOMENT, SANDERS FOUND HIMSELF IN A FORTNITE GRIP





SLINDERS MADE A WILD SWING, BUT THE SWORD SEEMED TO WINDH before HIS EYES

**THUNK!**

I DON'T GET IT. I'M USING ALL MY STRENGTH AND IT'S JUST NOT BUDGING.



SLINDERS STAMPEDED, STRUCK BY A SUDDEN SILENCE THAT DESCENDED ON THE DORRENING MESSRS. AND THEN...

THAT SHUFFLING SOUND COMING FROM BEHIND ME.

SLINDERS TURNED, AND FACED A SIGHT THAT TURNED HIS BLOOD TO ICE.



SLINDERS' EXCLAMATION WAS CHOKED INTO SILENCE AS TWO SKELETAL HANDS GRABBED HIS THROAT IN A GRIP OF STEEL.



**GAAAK!**

IT WAS A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE SLAUGHTER WAS DISCOVERED. POLICE SEARCHED THE SURROUNDING AREA... AND THE MYSTERY DEEPENED WHEN...

**OH MY GOD!**



WE FOUND A THIRD BODY IN THE WOODS. SHE SET GREAT FEAR BEHIND THERE WAS A DIRTY GREAT CROW 'AVING A GO AT IT. WE SCARED IT OFF.

BUT I'M SAYING WE WERE TOO LATE!



G-SOOD GRIEF CHOKES!

THE END!

# HOUSE OF HAMMER BARGAIN BASEMENT

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PRODUCED BY ROBERT ROY POOL. WRITTEN BY ROBERT ROY POOL. DIRECTED BY ROBERT ROY POOL.

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